THOUGHTS

FOR

QUIET HOURS

THROUGH THE YEAR

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Book _____

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REV. J. B. J. RHODES

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QUIET HOURS

THROUGH THE YEAR

By REV. J. B. J. RHODES
Member of the
New Jersey Annual Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church

INTRODUCTION

—*by*—

REV. L. W. MUNHALL, A. M., D. D.

Evangelist and Author

1918

Long Branch, N. J.

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To My Wife

FANNIE INGALLS RHODES

this little volume

is affectionately dedicated

INTRODUCTION

This old sin-cursed, war-scarred world is heaving and yeasting in the throes of the most horrible tragedy it has ever known,—furious in the restlessness of unstable and unsatisfying things. Thrones are crumbling, dynasties failing, hopes perishing, hearts aching and breaking, while the fiends of earth and hell are running riot. But in the darkest hour of the world's agony may be heard, above the roar of battle, the voice of Him who has all power and authority in heaven and upon earth saying—"My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." He "is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Apart from the confusion and horrors of national strife, is the fact that this is a restless age. We are driving so fast and furiously that one has but little chance or time to think calmly upon the weighty and solemn problems of life and eternity. Many of our people cannot find time to attend the regular services of the Church; and some of those who do attend find it difficult to concentrate and keep their minds upon the worship of the house of prayer and the things that make for righteousness and peace. Helping any one to understand that "the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever," in these dark, stormy and trying times; and into the sweet experience of that peace which passeth all understanding," is most surely a greatly needed and God-appointed ministry,—and the author of this volume has certainly been guided and blessed of God in the work he has done; and without doubt, the volume will be a means of blessing to all who will give attention to it. I pray God's favor to accompany it on its mission of love.

L. W. MUNHALL.

GERMANTOWN, PHILA., PA.
OCTOBER 10, 1918.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

In sending forth this little volume, our chief desire has been to present to the reader such thoughts for the "Quiet Hours" of life as will strengthen his Faith in God, and in the "Hope that maketh not ashamed".

We make no claim for it of literary excellence, or even of definite originality. The Truths herein set forth are very ancient, but nevertheless still remain as bulwarks to the common faith of humanity. With the Psalmist, we may say:

"While I was musing the fire burned."

J. B. J. RHODES.

Simpson Memorial Parsonage,
Long Branch, N. J.
October 31, 1918.

JANUARY

Do not look at life's long sorrow;
See how small each moment's pain;
God will help thee for tomorrow,
So each day begin again.

Every hour that fleets so slowly
Has its task to do or bear;
Luminous the crown, and holy,
When each gem is set with care.

Do not linger with regretting,
Or for passing hours despond;
Nor the daily toil forgetting,
Look too eagerly beyond.

Hours are golden links, God's token
Reaching heaven; but one by one
Take them, lest the chain be broken
Ere the pilgrimage be done.

—ADELAIDE A. PROCTOR.

FIRST SUNDAY

A MOTTO FOR THE NEW YEAR

"Forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—St. Paul.

UNQUESTIONABLY the key-note of human history has been "Progress". We may certainly affirm that so far as the teachings of the Bible are concerned, "progress" in the kingdom of God is the one theme that is emphasized. What did the patriarchs, prophets and leaders of Old Testament times say? Did they not command Israel to "Go forward" and possess the rich pasture lands of Canaan?

When John the Baptist, and later Jesus, came, it was to summon all true followers to the advance movement of the Kingdom toward the higher life of Christian love. In the above motto, the Apostle Paul, after a life of unusual hardship and toil, feeling the tides of material life ebbing from him, sounds the note of Christian optimism. Progress in the Christian life. Here then is our thought for the new year.

Paul uses the figure of the racers, who "when performing their feats in competition, reach forward, in their rushing intensity, with both body and arms, and think of nothing—neither that which is in the present, nor that which is behind—but measuring the distance before them, with their eyes fixed upon it, and are straining every nerve each to touch the goal first, and win the prize." Grecian history relates that one Ladis, fell down dead, as soon as

he had received the prize, showing what men will sometimes do to win the fading honors and prizes of the present life.

There may be a past from which we shrink, but the prize is set before us. The Christian's prayer is

"Teach me to live and find my life in Thee,
Looking from earth and earthly things away.
Let me not falter, but untiringly
Press on and gain new strength and power each day."

FIVE NEW YEAR RESOLVES

1. I will forgive all offenses.
2. I will pray every day for my Church, my neighbors and my Country.
3. I will express appreciation for all blessings or favors received.
4. I will not drink, nor encourage the use of intoxicating liquors, as a beverage.
5. I will not indulge in idle gossip, nor encourage it in others.

THE TREASURIES OF THE SNOW

"Hast thou entered the treasuries of the snow?"—Job.

THE beautiful snow is Winter's choicest gift. "The dews of a thousand Summers wait in the womb of the snow." So wrote Bayard Taylor. "Snowflakes are feathers dropped from birds of Paradise in the ether blue. Sunbeams kiss them and the tints of Paradise thus are born anew", declares Helen W. Grove.

Truly from our Creator, falling snowflakes bring messages to earth. They teach us a lesson of *Purity*. Their whiteness suggests this. King David prayed: "Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow". Describing his vision of Christ, St. John on Patmos wrote: "His hair and his head were as white as snow". And does not this universal whiteness of the snow remind us all of the purity of heart that characterizes the true people of God? The world's Redeemer said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God".

Snowflakes also bring a message of *Beauty*. Scientists catching the falling flakes have classified them as crystals in a thousand exquisite forms of star and cross and crown. Observing the frostwork—the rainbows in icicles and jewels in silvery drapery falling around us—are we not impressed with the finished character of the architecture?

Behold their message of *Power*. Emerson describes a snow drift as "the north wind's masonry". A single snowflake will melt

on a baby's finger, but piled up on streets and railways it defies the mightiest armies and engines.

"*Over the country, the hills and the plains,*
Piling up higher and blocking the trains;
Stopping the mails from far and near,
Shutting off news from friends so dear.
Even Cupid himself must hang up his bow,
Suspending his work, 'because of the snow'."

—M. W. GIFFORD.

SNOW FLAKES

Out of the bosom of the Air,
  Out of the cloud-folds of her garments shaken
Over the woodlands brown and bare,
  Over the harvest-fields forsaken,
    Silent and soft, and slow
    Descends the snow.

Even as our cloudy fancies take
  Suddenly shape in some divine expression,
Even as the troubled heart doth make
  In the white countenance confession,
    The troubled sky reveals
    The grief it feels.

This is the poem of the air,
  Slowly in silent syllables recorded;
This is the secret of despair,
  Long in its cloudy bosom hoarded,
    Now whispered and revealed
    To wood and field.

—*H. W. Longfellow.*

THIRD SUNDAY

THE BOOK OF GOD

"Seek ye out of the Book of Jehovah and read."—Isaiah.

BOOKS are a mighty power for good or evil, according to their character. In all ages the Bible, as compared with other books, has held a conspicuous place. Sir Walter Scott said: "There is only one book—the Bible". Charles A. Dana declared "There is no book from which more valuable lessons can be learned". Luther wrote: "The Scriptures are the legacy of the early Church to universal humanity; they are the equal and treasured inheritance of all nations, and tribes, and kindreds upon the face of the earth, and will be till the day of judgment".

The Bible has a wonderful history. It has met and overcome all books foreign to its character. The greatest writers and musicians of the world have drawn from it their loftiest themes. Artists have illustrated the precepts of the Book and became famous. Musical composers have blended in harmony and song the spirit of the Book. During the Reformation it passed through a long war, but was victorious. Its teachings, when obeyed, have always proven beneficial to individuals and nations. Bishop Fowler once said: "Marvelous book. Full of divine life and power. No one can touch even the hem of its garment without being healed. No one can come near enough even to stone it without being blessed. It stands alone without a rival—even its enemies themselves being judges".

Whittier truthfully sings:

"We search the world for truth; we cull
The good, the pure, the beautiful,
From graven stone and written scroll,
From the old flower-fields of the soul,
And, weary seekers for the best,
We come back laden from the quest,
To find that all the sages said
Is in the book our Mothers read."

This Book of books should be prized by all. It is the word of Truth. Let not the dust gather upon its cover; nor its precepts go unheeded in your life.

GOD'S MESSAGE

The Bible is God's message to us. But to many of us it is not much more than an inscription is to the roving shepherds of the plain. Even the precepts of Jesus, so clear and so easily applied to life in any age and circumstances, are read by us and heard with little thought that they are God's direct call down the centuries to us to heed and do what they say.

Is the Bible God's message to you? That depends, not on what you say you believe about the Bible, but on what you do with the word that God through the Bible is this day bringing to you. The Bible is a wonder, and a monument; but it is not a message until it has reached a heart and come forth in holiness and service.

—*Alexander McCall.*

THE PERFECT RULE FOR LIFE

"All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them; for this is the law and the prophets."—Jesus.

HEREIN is found the Golden Rule, so-called because of its antiquity, its lofty ideal and its general acceptance by mankind. It is the perfect rule for every life. Christ lived by it and commends it to all men—rich, poor, savage, citizen, king and peasant. Its standard of action toward others is self; its standard of relations is the rights of others.

Is it practicable? Try it. Do you want your neighbor to hate you? Hate him. Respect you? Respect him. Forgive you? Forgive him. To love you? Love him. Echo always gives back the same word that is spoken. Jesus said: "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven".

Here is the rule for the laborer and the capitalist; the employe and the employer; the ruler and the subject; the master and the servant; the cultured and the ignorant; the saint and the sinner.

This is the rule that not only works, but never fails to work when men apply it. "This is the law and the prophets."

The golden rule will also be the rule of the Golden age—yet to be. So sings Walt Whitman:

"The song is to the singer and comes back most to him;
The love is to the lover and comes back most to him;
The gift is to the giver and comes back most to him—
It cannot fail."

FEBRUARY

*"We shall wake up and find that the frost-spirit has been at work all night building Gothic cathedrals on our windows. * * * The silent falling of the snow is to me one of the most solemn things in Nature. The fall of autumnal leaves does not so much affect me. * * * And ever faster fell the snow, a roaring torrent from those mountainous clouds. * * * Thus the evening set in; and Winter stood at the gate wagging his white and shaggy beard, like an old harper chanting an old rhyme: 'How cold it is! How cold it is!"*

—H. W. LONGFELLOW *in "Hyperion."*

THE QUIET HOUR

"Be still and know that I am God."—Psalmist.

THE quiet of a shadow haunted pool
Where light breaks through in glorious tenderness.
Where the hushed pilgrim in the shadow cool
Forgets the way's distress—
Such is this hour, this silent hour with Thee.
The trouble of the restless heart is still;
And every swaying wish breathes reverently
The whisper of Thy will."

Not sorrow's hour; nor the quiet of indifference; nor of stifled emotions. But the quiet hour of reflection; of prayer; of submission to the call of the Divine; the hour of worship; of spiritual relaxation.

It is needful. The times are strenuous. The demands are incessant. The nervous strain exhausting. The quiet hour provides the remedy for over-taxed, anxious-hearted souls. Emerson declared that "Great deeds are born in solitude". The Man of Galilee frequently entered into the solitary place and prayed.

The hour of quietness yields many blessed fruits. It is the secret of inward strength. By it is furnished power to endure and serve upon the battlefields of life. General Grant was known as the "silent man," but there was none greater on the field of conflict.

It is the secret of inward peace. The world seems full of discord, strife, misery and trouble. There is a solace in silence.

Secret sins and hidden tragedies must be confessed. The quiet hour brings the sinner to the altar of penitence. Peace comes when war ceases.

"Study to be quiet" is the Apostolic injunction. Make a place for the quiet hour in your daily program. "He who dwells much in the temple of silence learns to know himself. He who knows himself is close to God."

THE POWER OF QUIETNESS

Forget not the unmeasured ministry of these rarest souls who have modestly shrunk from public gaze, yet who have created an atmosphere on which the nurture of our nobler self so much depends. Flowers may bloom in the hidden recess of the forest; the nightingale may send forth his worthiest note upon the silent, unresponding night, but shaping the very heart of things, and guarding the common weal, are those unobtrusive souls who give their largess to the world's great work. Quiet are the stars. Asleep the magic forces of nature seem. Silent are the souls of some men, yet how beneficent in worth! Underrated by reason of their obscurity, yet easier is it "to bind the sweet influences of Pleiades or loose the bands of Orion" than to restrain the salutary effect of a quiet, reverent life.

—JOHN HUMPHREY, *in Methodist Review.*

SIXTH SUNDAY

THE OPPORTUNITY OF YOUTH

"Let no man despise thy youth."—Saint Paul.

WHEN David presented himself to King Saul as a volunteer to fight the giant Goliath, the king looked at his ruddy face and said: "Thou art but a youth, and he is a man of war from his youth". But David was not frightened by this fact. The consent of the king was finally given; David went up to battle in the name of the Lord and the giant was slain. Do we not learn from this incident that no man is able to estimate the power of the youth who has God on his side. It is so of every youth who goes to battle against the enemies of life. With God on his side, victory is certain.

Those familiar with the writings of Paul cannot fail to notice his deep interest in young men. The age in which we are now living has seen a marked awakening in the estimate which Paul has placed upon the power of consecrated youth. We believe these utterances estimate in general terms the opportunity placed before the youth in all periods of time.

Paul declares that it is within the power of every youth to live in honor and beyond reproach. He shows that a pure life is the strongest recommendation. A reputation for boldness, unrefined conduct, lewdness and many other undesirable habits in the life of the youth is usually the result of causes of like nature. Paul's word of counsel to youth is, that they may so order their lives that none shall have honest occasion to speak of them in dishonor or reproach.

The ideal then is a pure life; not for the sake merely of reputation—though this is commendable—but purity of life because God hath said: "Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers".

"Is the young man safe?" the heart-wrung cry
Has an age-long ring that brings it nigh.
'Tis the nameless dread at the father's heart,
As he sees his son from the home depart;
'Tis the burden of many a mother's prayer
For the boy who wanders she knows not where;
'Tis the harrowing fear that will not sleep
Till it plows in the forehead its furrows deep.

—RECORD OF CHRISTIAN WORK.

IMPROVEMENT OF OPPORTUNITY

You do well to improve your opportunity; to speak in the rural phrase, this is your sowing time, and the sheaves you look for can never be yours, unless you make that use of it. The color of our whole life is generally such as the three or four first years in which we are our own masters, make it. Then it is that we may be said to shape our destiny, and to treasure up for ourselves a series of future successes or disappointments.

—*Cowper.*

THE WELL-SPRING OF EVERLASTING LIFE

"The water I shall give shall become within a well of water springing up unto eternal life."—Jesus.

HO! every one that thirsts draw nigh:
'Tis God invites the fallen race:
Mercy and free salvation buy;
Buy wine, and milk, and gospel grace.
Come to the living waters, come!
Sinners, obey your Maker's call,
Return ye weary wanderers, home,
And find my grace is free for all."

—*Charles Wesley.*

By the side of Jacob's well Jesus taught an erring soul the secret of the Christian's enlarging life. The point of contact was a drink of water—one of the most common of God's free gifts. Pure water from an earthly spring possesses a cleansing, refreshing, beautifying and fruit-giving power. All physical life is sustained by it, and without it, death in a most horrible form ensues.

Jesus taught the Samaritan woman that as water is essential to the sustenance of all physical life, so the water from spiritual fountains is essential to the life of the Christian. He said: "The water I shall give shall become within a well of water springing up unto eternal life". The figure used must not be contrasted to the reservoir, the cistern or even a canal. These are but receptacles for

water. The Saviour promises to put within the soul of all who seek from Him the water, *a well-spring of life*. It will spring forth as a cleansing, refreshing, regenerating and healing power.

Fellow Christian, have you drunk this living water from the cup which the Master offers you? Of Israel it was once said: "They have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." But to Abram Jehovah said: "I will bless thee and be thou a blessing." Shall the request of this penitent Samaritan woman be yours: "Lord, give me this water, that I thirst not."

AN OPEN FOUNTAIN

It is related of a benevolent man, that he lived in a village poorly supplied with water. Dry seasons exhausted the wells, and reduced the citizens to great straits. About a mile distant was a never-failing spring. The waters from this he conducted by pipes to the heart of the village, and so furnished a supply at all seasons to the inhabitants. This act of generosity touched the people; and, when he was dead, they erected a monument to his memory by the fountain that he had opened for their benefit. Such a fountain has Jesus opened to assauge the thirst and save the lives of perishing men. It rises as the river of the water of life out of the throne of God and of the Lamb; and the Spirit and the Bride call to the thirsting multitudes lining its banks to approach, and partake freely of its healing virtue.—*Selected.*

GATHERED LILIES

"My beloved is gone down to his garden to gather lilies."—Song of Solomon.

HOW fitting is the comparison between lilies and children. In nature's garden no sweeter or more beautiful flower grows than the lily. In God's great garden of humanity none are purer or sweeter than the child.

Our children—how pure, delicate and beautiful are they. Richter wisely says: "The smallest children are nearest to God, as the smallest planets are nearest the sun." Because of their inherent innocence heaven claims all the children. Jesus said: "To such belongeth the kingdom of heaven."

But the lilies are easily sullied and soon fade, so delicate and tender are they. So are the children. The physical organism may seem perfect but it is often so easily overpowered by the ravages of disease.

"The air is full of farewells for the dying
And mourning for the dead;
The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,
Will not be comforted." —LONGFELLOW.

There is a garnering time and it is the Beloved Christ who walks with quiet step and plucks these choice lilies from his family garden. He gathers his own. If only the sorrowing heart can say "My beloved", this is the victory. We shall see again these garden flowers blooming in a fairer land.

"And the mother gave in tears and pain
The flowers she most did love,
She knew she should find them all again,
In the fields of light above."

MARCH

Slayer of winter, art thou here again?
O welcome, thou that bringest the summer nigh!
The bitter wind makes not thy victory vain,
Nor will we mock thee for thy faint blue sky.
Welcome, O March! whose kindly days and dry
Make April ready for the throstle's song,
Thou first redresser of the winter's wrong!

—WILLIAM MORRIS.

NINTH SUNDAY

THE PATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS

"The path of the righteous is as the dawning light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."—Solomon.

WALK in the light! and thou shalt own
Thy darkness passed away,
Because that light hath on thee shone
In which is perfect day."

—Bernard Barton.

After all, righteousness is the only beauty to be desired and sought for in this life. Such is unfading and universally admired. In all ages the righteous have blazed a trail of light through this dark world. What a glorious array of character portraits is presented to us in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. To refresh our faith we need only to consider the quality of character thus revealed. Each is a luminary in the midst of his own generation. Beginning with Enoch, "who walked with God, and he was not for God took him", to Moses, who "accounted the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt", do we not behold the dawning light of righteousness in the midst of heathen darkness?

In a most positive sense this path of the righteous has a starting point, a direction and a goal. It begins in the positive acknowledgment of the Divine sovereignty, in the direction of a godly life, continuing toward the perfect day of eternal bliss. This path is frequently illuminated by definite spiritual experiences. As there is a sunrise every day upon the earth in the journey of the

great luminary which brightens the whole earth, so there are sunrise experiences in the soul's journey from earth to heaven.

We observe also that this path progresses in the midst of the steadily increasing light of the Divine presence. There is a growth in grace; a righteous discontent; an upward trend. There is a light within to impel and a light shining without to guide.

Finally this path finds its consummation in the Perfect Day of the Holy City of God. David in his parting word declares: "He shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, a morning without clouds". D. L. Moody, the great evangelist, when dying shouted: "Earth is receding; heaven is opening; God is calling me; do not call me back." It was the coming of the perfect day to his soul.

"The morning shall awaken, the shadows shall decay,
And each true-hearted servant shall shine as doth the day:
There God, our King and portion, in fullness of his grace,
Shall we behold forever, and worship face to face."

—Bernard of Cluny.

TENTH SUNDAY

LIFE'S BURDENS MADE LIGHT

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."—Jesus.

LIFE'S burdens are many and grievous. Paul, the great Apostle, declares that "Each man shall bear his own burden", and then exhorts all Christians to "bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ".

There are burdens physical and spiritual. No class of humans is exempt. Standing alone under their weight mankind falters and despairs.

Who is He, then, that declares Himself to be life's great helper; the Supreme Teacher; the perfect example for the wide world? He is the man with a yoke and a burden. He does not ignore life's burdens, but shows how they may be lightened.

"Oh, burdened soul; Oh, sick one—come to Me" says Jesus. In His fellowship burdens will be lightened. Enroll as a pupil in His school. Take His yoke upon yourself, without faltering.

In a poem by Schiller is the beautiful story about the birds, that when they were first created they had no wings; and he says that God made the wings, put them down before the birds, and said: "Come, take up these burdens and bear them". The birds had beautiful plumage and voices. They could sing and shine, but they could not soar; but they took up their wings with their beaks and laid them upon their shoulders, and at first they seemed to be a heavy load and rather difficult to bear, but as they cheer-

fully and patiently bore them and folded them over their hearts, lo, the wings grew fast, and that which they once bore now bore them. The burdens became pinions and the weights became wings.

His yoke is easy because there is a lining of love; because He demands only a true and reasonable service. He gives the rest of security; the rest from struggle with sin and selfishness.

"I heard the voice of Jesus say, 'Come unto Me and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down thy head upon my breast.'
I came to Jesus as I was, weary and worn and sad;
I found in Him a resting-place, and He has made me glad."

—Horatius Bonar.

BEARING BURDENS

We are those that march through a wilderness, and each one carries some burden on his back—of toil, of sorrow, of sin; and in this caravan some go grumbling and complaining all their life because of the burden they are bearing, and some try to get their burden off slyly on to another's shoulders, and some bear bravely their own burden, and march uncomplainingly on; but some—the noblest of them all—are they who stand erect, bearing their own burdens, then creep up behind others burdened like themselves, and put their shoulders beneath the burden of their fellows and lift it. lightening the load. Blessed are they who know how to so bear their own burdens as joyfully to bear the burdens of others also!

—*Lyman Abbott, D. D.*

ELEVENTH SUNDAY

THE HAPPY LIFE—IT'S SECRET

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."—Solomon.

HUMAN life of'times presents a strange intermingling of sorrow and joy. Within a very short period of time there may occur simultaneously occasions of great joy and extreme sorrow. We do not wonder when asked: "Why these startling paradoxes?"

Still, the world's quest is for happiness. How can it be found? What is the remedy for the world's sadness? The wise man says: "Out of the heart are the issues of life". We know this is true in the world of nature, for life finds its beginning in the heart of the seed. All development is from within outward, whether it be the sprouting of a seed, the growing of a tree or the blooming of a flower. So in the realm of the soul—the heart is the reservoir of life. Jesus said: "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh". The issues of life are not then in the pocket book; nor in culture but in the heart. Hence the poet sings:

"True happiness is not the growth of earth,
The soil is fruitless if you seek it there;
'Tis an exotic of celestial birth,
And never blooms but in celestial air.
Sweet plant of Paradise, its seeds are sown
In here and there a breast of heavenly mould;
It rises slow and buds, but ne'er has known
To blossom here—the climate is too cold."

—R. B. SHERIDAN.

Happiness is the accompaniment of moral perfection; the natural expression of the pure in heart. A happy heart is the secret of a happy life.

Naturalists inform us that the power of the loadstone is in the presence of certain congenial elements of nature. Thus the happy life is maintained in keeping close to and possessing within the power of the great magnet—Christ, for in His presence all solicitation of evil fails to draw away from God. David prayed: "Create for me a clean heart, O God". The Saviour said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God". All of which teaches us to "be good and we will be happy".

HAPPINESS

The road to home happiness lies over small stepping-stones. Slight circumstances are the stumbling-blocks in families. The prick of a pin, says the proverb, is enough to make an empire insipid. The tenderer the feeling, the more painful the wound. A cold, unkind word checks and withers the blossom of the dearest love, as the most delicate rings of the vine are troubled by the faintest breeze. The misery of life is born of a chance observation. If the true history of quarrels, public and private, were honestly written, it would be silenced by an uproar of derision.—*Selected.*

Twelfth Sunday

THE MINISTRY OF SONG

"Serve Jehovah with gladness and come before his presence with singing."—The Psalmist.

MUSIC has been defined as "A divine art, a universal language, a vehicle of worship, a soothing, inspiring and saving force." A writer from Africa says: "Nothing is done there without song. The boatman sings all day long, keeping time with his paddles; the woman beating rice beats in time to her voice; the carriers sing to their tread; the farmer to his hoe."

That was a true utterance which says: "Religious faith has kindled the music of the world". Unbelief has no comforting songs; despair no sonnets. Sinful conditions are unfavorable to exaltation or praise. Doubt begets no joy. The world has no sacred songs, but Christ brought life and immortality to light. Religion fills the heart with gladness, the mouth with songs of praise. To make a man happy is not always to change his surroundings, but change the man.

Paul, the great Apostle, evidently believed in christian song. He writes to the Colossians: 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God".

Our Saviour sang. And why should he not? His heart was full of sympathy; he had a clear conscience. He foresaw the ultimate triumph of goodness and truth. The Gospel tells us that

even when the disciples were gathered with Him at the Last Supper, He sang.

How the early Christians must have sung. Indeed the Church of Christ has come down through the years like a singing bird with the dew of the morning upon its wings.

Our fathers sang—some of the grand old hymns are echoing in our ears to-day. The Church of Christ must ever be a singing Church. David had a choir of three hundred voices; there were in the Jewish Church 4,000 Levites who praised God on musical instruments. So in our day and generation let us not surrender to the forces of evil all the beautiful vehicles of the divine art, but capture and hold for God's glory, all instruments of whatever name, that we may win men to the discipleship of Jesus.

"O for a thousand tongues to sing My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King, the triumphs of his grace!
My gracious Master and my God, assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad, the honors of thy name."

—CHARLES WESLEY.

IN MEMORIAM

TO MOTHER, FATHER, BROTHER AND SISTER

"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me."—David.

ANSWER me, burning stars of night; where is the spirit gone,
That, past the reach of human sight, even as a breeze hath flown?
And the stars answer'd me, "We roll in light and power on high,
But, of the never-dying soul, ask things that cannot die."

O many-toned and chainless Wind! thou art a wanderer free;
Tell me if thou its place canst find, far over mount and sea?
And the Wind murmur'd in reply, "The blue deep I have cross'd,
And met its barks and billows high, but not what thou hast lost."

Ye Clouds that gorgeously repose around the setting sun,
Answer! have ye a home for those whose earthly race has run?
The bright Clouds answer'd, "We depart, we vanish from the sky;
Ask what is deathless in thy heart, for that which cannot die!"

Speak then, thou Voice of God within, thou of the deep low tone!
Answer me through life's restless din, where is the Spirit flown?
And the Voice answer'd, "Be thou still! enough to know is given;
Clouds, Winds, and Stars *their* task fulfil, *thine* is to trust in Heaven."

—*Mrs. F. D. Hemans.*

APRIL

Sweet April! many a thought
Is wedded unto thee, as hearts are wed;
Nor shall they fail, till, to its autumn brought,
Life's golden fruit is shed.

—H. W. Longfellow.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY

THE EASTER HOPE

"I am the resurrection and the life."—Jesus.

THE Christian doctrine of the resurrection is the answer to the oft-repeated question "If a man die, shall he live again?" Before his death Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life." In the fact of the resurrection we see the truth of his words and the proof of his divinity. Here Jesus points the road to immortality. He indeed did bring life and immortality to light. On the tombs of the heathen was often seen the epitaph: "Farewell—forever—my brother". The assurance Jesus gives to all his followers is "He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live". The interest in this question is universal. The Stoics wavered in their attitude toward the future, proudly trying to make the best of it. When life became too hard, they tried to end it by self destruction. The motto of the Epics was "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

The Christian Church was built upon the conviction and proclamation of a risen saviour. Jesus taught this to the disciples. St. John and St. Peter witnessed and defended the same. St. Paul accepted and defended the teaching. Wherever accepted the teaching has thrilled the human race with gladness. It brings to the world a message of victory. By death Jesus vanquished death. At the grave the angel said to the women: "He is risen."

The teaching of Easter brings a message of Hope.. Without Jesus and the resurrection, death obscures our vision. We cannot

lift the vail. But the resurrection message causes us to say with Peter: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."

It brings also a message of Life. In Springtime nature puts on new life. The grass, the flowers and the trees are bursting with natural energy. Out of the grave of Winter all vegetation rises with a song. The resurrection of Jesus adds new power to all his words. They are truth and life. The resurrection life is our heritage. "If ye then be raised together with Christ, seek the things which are above."

EASTERTIDE

To-day "the Lord is risen, indeed,
And hath appeared; "yet we, as they,
Are slow the potent truth to heed,
Nor deem that all man's greatest need
Is met because of Easter day.

—*Marianne Farningham.*

CHRIST OUR MODEL

"Christ is all and in all."—St. Paul.

IN the study of duty and destiny, which is of vastly more importance to humanity than science, literature or art, the question naturally arises, who shall be the model in the formation of character; in the solution of the problems of duty and destiny?

We are at first inclined to follow some human example. When we observe a noble trait of character in any, we find ourselves imitators. This would be well, were it not for the fact that we are as apt to imitate the defects of men as well as their virtues. Man is not a perfect being, and for this reason we are sometimes disappointed in men. At different periods in life men change their standards, and are therefore uncertain, as safe guides. No one man has ever yet exhibited the perfect life which could at all times be a true standard. The most exalted human characters are fallible and weak. Are we then to despair in our search for the true model? No.

As no man can make a real success of life without following the highest ideals, so we are to follow the Christ, recognizing in Him the true model for all men in all lands.

Christ is the true model of Obedience.

He was subject to his parents, honoring them as a son. His meat and drink was to do the will of the Father. Obedience to the moral law is the secret of moral health.

Christ is our model for victorious conquest.

"He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." He was, and forever will be, conqueror in every conquest. He is not a High Priest merely of profession, but has been "touched with the feelings of our infirmities". He bids us be brave in life's hard battles. There are no retreats on His Marches. Forward is the watchword of His Kingdom. Though born a helpless babe His dominion now stretches around the globe.

Christ is our model of patience and resignation in the midst of Life's sufferings.

While the miracle of his birth is marvelous, was not the sublime patience of the Christ a greater one? "He opened not His mouth" when cruel enemies persecuted, and even friends forsook Him in the hour of loneliness. His patient and resigned attitude should inspire us to imitate these virtues, for by this process the pure gold of character is revealed. We may not understand the suffering; the temptation; the burden or the task. But we know the Christ was patient.

THE HOUR OF SECRET PRAYER

"When thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret."—Jesus.

WE do not wonder when the disciples saw and heard the Master pray, that they said: "Lord, teach us to pray." They discerned the effect of the prayer hour upon his life. Then, if He needed to pray, how much more do all his disciples need to learn this holy art.

What is this wonderful truth? God is in the secret place; He sees the secrets of all hearts; He rewards those who seek Him thus. Then the secret hour of prayer is not only the Christian's duty, it is a gracious privilege and boon. Family prayer may be irksome; public prayer a cross; but here is the sacred place for all—the hour of secret prayer.

Fellow Christian, do you feel the need of help? Are you discouraged? weary? burdened? lonely?—enter thy secret place; shut the door; shut out the busy world; shut thyself in with Him who dwelleth in the secret place. He will surely help, encourage, strengthen, rest and comfort thee.

O Lord, I pray
That for this day
I may not swerve
By foot or hand
From thy command,
Not to be served, but to serve.

This, too, I pray
That for this day
No love of ease
Nor pride prevent
My good intent,
Not to be pleased, but to please.

And if I may
I'd have this day
Strength from above
To set my heart
In heavenly art,
Not to be loved, but to love.

—Rev. Maltbie D. Babcock, D. D.

PRAYER

Grant me, O most loving Lord, to rest in Thee above all creatures, above all health and beauty, above all glory and honor, above all power and dignity, above all knowledge and subtilty, above all riches and art, above all fame and praise, above all sweetness and comfort, above all hope and promise, above all gifts and favors that Thou canst give and impart to us, above all jubilee that the mind of man can receive and feel; finally, above all angels and archangels, and above all the heavenly host, above all things visible and invisible, and above all that Thou art not, O my God. It is too small and unsatisfying, whatsoever Thou bestowest on me apart from Thee, or revealest to me, or promisest, whilst Thou art not seen, and not fully obtained. For surely my heart cannot truly rest, nor be entirely contented, until it rest in Thee. Amen.

—*Thomas a Kempis.*

"AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?"

"He first findeth his own brother Simon and brought him to Jesus."
—The Gospel of Jesus.

"WE need, each and all, to be needed,
To feel we have something to give
Toward soothing the moan of earth's hunger;
And we know that only we live
When we feed one another, as we have been fed,
From the Hand that gives body and spirit their bread."
—Lucy Larcom.

It is undoubtedly true that the nearer we approach one another the more we feel our brotherhood. A traveler relates the following: "Walking on the mountains one day, I saw a form which I took to be a beast. Coming nearer, I saw it was a man; approaching nearer still, I found it was my brother."

When Cain asked "Am I my brother's keeper?" did he not show the lack of true brotherly feeling? But Andrew was another kind of man. "He first findeth his own brother Simon and brought him to Jesus."

It is not enough to find one's self inside the kingdom. Other folks should be brought. Jesus, our Elder Brother, came to "seek and save the lost". Without this spirit of personal concern for others, how will the kingdom be increased?

Has the unsaved, unfed, illiterate world about no claim upon the saved, well-fed, educated world? Cain tried to ignore his brother's claim. Andrew felt it and tried to do his part. Which would you rather be?

And is not the spirit of Cain abroad in the world to-day? Many do not seem to care for themselves or for their dearest. But thank God for the spirit of Andrew, which is also observed. Many do care. All true followers of Christ are concerned about their brothers. We are our brother's keeper. We are responsible for his moral and spiritual condition. Men will respond when they are sought by those whom they love. Andrew should be imitated.

WINNING MEN

That individual soul-winning is the greatest work is part of the paradox-principle of the Way of Life. One is more than many. The least is the greatest. You cannot reach a thousand unless you can reach one. The greatest preaching is the preaching to an individual. The greatest preachers, pastors, evangelists, and missionaries agree as to this. General preaching is preliminary or preparatory to this end and climax of effort, individual work for individuals.

That it was Christ's preferred method in his earthly ministry is seen from a study of the gospels and an examination of the relative results of his individual and his general work. Seven of the eleven faithful apostles were so won; so also was the last of the Apostles, Paul. That it is Christ's preferred method for us to-day is seen from the easily proved superior effectiveness of the method in every branch of religious and secular life.

—*C. G. Trumbull.*

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY

SOWING AND REAPING

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."—St. Paul.

WHEN those who are reproved for certain wrong-doing, reply "I don't care", they may be standing upon the threshold of a great undertaking. Such a spirit in the light of knowledge, seems almost like madness. A woman who had eleven sons once said to them: "Boys who don't care are very apt to come to a bad end."

What would you think of a locomotive engineer, when being told that a certain bridge was unsafe because it was on fire, replied "I don't care"? If life was destroyed by such heedlessness, would he not be guilty of murder?

If young people boast of sowing their "wild oats" are warned to repent, but say "I don't care", and then as a result of their own folly reap a woful harvest, have they not committed spiritual suicide?

Indifference to the law of the harvest and the don't care spirit has brought disaster to many a promising life.

Sitting on a curbstone in a dark corner of a great city was a young man of the "don't care" type. A friend looked into his face. It was once beautiful, but now flushed and bruised. He looked up and said "I don't care." How sad. Some mother cared once. God above us cared. Early in life he had sown the "don't care" spirit; sown to the flesh and of it reaped corruption—a harvest of misery and wretchedness. "But he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

MAY

Hail, bounteous May! that dost inspire
Mirth, and youth, and warm desire;
Woods and groves are of thy dressing,
Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing.
Thus we salute thee with our early song,
And welcome thee and wish thee long.

—JOHN MILTON.

Nineteenth Sunday

WHAT IS IN THINE HAND?

"Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."
—Solomon.

STUDENTS in physiology tell us that the hand, in its perfection, belongs only to man. Its elegance of outline, delicacy of mold and beauty of color have made it the study of artists, while its adaptation as a perfect instrument have led many philosophers to atrribute man's superiority even more to the hand than to the mind.

The hand is the symbol of human action. He who lives a pure life is said to have pure or clean hands; unjust hands are guilty of injustice, etc. When Jacob secured the blessing which rightfully belonged to Esau we are told that his hands were clothed in fur, that through deception he might secure the blessing promised to his brother. These were rightfully hands of deception. It was the hand of a murderer, which, though covered, was extended in the attitude of friendliness, but held a weapon which shot down our third martyred President, William McKinley. His were indeed "hands of blood". And does not the Bible speak of the "slack hand", the "diligent hand", the "smiting hand", the "hand of blessing", and many others?

The hand is the symbol of opportunity. When Jarius' daughter was healed, Jesus took her by the hand and the maid arose. It was the opportunity to pass from death to life, as indicated by the outstretched hand of the Master. Peter was bold enough to step out of the water at the command of Jesus, but when he found him-

self sinking, Jesus stretched forth his hand. This was Peter's opportunity and had he refused the "hand" of the Lord, he might never have lived to tell the story.

The hand is the symbol of friendliness. The scene of David and Jonathan in the wilderness of Ziph, strengthening their hands in God, will forever illustrate this symbolism. Perhaps we do not know the origin of the "hand-shake", but it is now, and always has been, an important factor in the spreading of sociability.

There are no empty hands in the race of mankind. All men have their sphere of activity; their opportunity for development; may exercise the grace of friendliness. God said to Moses: "What is in thine hand?". It may be only a rod, but when used for the glory of God, may become a mighty agency for doing good in the world. David, what is in thine hand? A sling, with only five smooth stones. Go out in the name of God and smite the mighty giant. And he did so. Widow at the treasury, what is in thine hand? Only a mite, Lord. Cast it in, my daughter, and thou shalt give more than all, and "thy name shall be held in everlasting remembrance."

"Beautiful hands are those that do
Work that is earnest, and brave, and true,
Moment by moment the long day through."

BIRDS OF THE AIR

"The birds of the air have nests."—Jesus.

IT was a charming morning in the month of May. The sun smiled upon the world from his hiding place in the far East. The grasses and blossoms glistened with dew drops; the air was balmy and the birds were fairly splitting their throats with the song that could be heard from the tree tops far and near. They were keeping tune to the march of Springtime in the country. Joy and beauty were found everywhere and the world was glad, for "the time of the singing of birds had come".

Poets have sung; artists have sketched; orators have spoken; but all these are dumb in the presence of Nature clad in Springtide.

The Bible is in no small sense a text-book on "bird study", for there are no less than sixty-five varieties of birds mentioned and many special references in which birds figure prominently, make it valuable as such.

We may observe, then, some of the habits and characteristics of the birds, with lessons suggested:

The birds of the air are home-builders. They have nests. And what a variety. It is believed that there is scarcely any end to the variety of bird architecture. But let it be said of the birds that all their home building is preceded by a season of genuine courtship. In the selecting and finding of mates there is often seen rivalry and gallantry scarcely equalled by human kind.

Birds are examples of industry. If Solomon said "Go to the ant, thou sluggard", so we say: "Watch the birds, thou indifierent,

indolent member of society". They are never late in reaching their home in the north, though sometimes early. They build their nests in Springtime, not Autumn.

Birds are examples of cheerfulness. Most birds are singers. Each bird sings his own song.

Shankland, in kind words relates the following legend of the Rose, the Bird and the Brook:

"I will not give away my perfume," said a rosebud, holding its pink petals tightly wrapped in their tiny green case. The other roses bloomed in splendor, and those who enjoyed their fragrance exclaimed at their beauty and sweetness; but the selfish bud shriveled and withered away unnoticed.

"No, no," said a little bird; "I do not want to sing." But when his brothers soared aloft on joyous wings, pouring a flood of melody, making weary hearers forget sorrow and bless the singers, then the forlorn little bird was lonesome and ashamed. He tried to sing, but the power was gone; he could make only a harsh, shrill chirp.

"If I give away my wavelets, I shall not have enough myself," said the brook. And it hoarded all its water in a hollow place, where it formed a stagnant, slimy pool.

A boy who loved a fresh, wide-awake rose, a buoyant, singing bird, and a leaping, refreshing brooklet thought on these things, and said, "If I would have and would be, I must share all my goods with others, for

'To give is to live;
To deny is to die'."

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY

THE CHRISTIAN RACE

"So run that ye may obtain."—St. Paul.

IN the days of St. Paul, the Apostle, not far from Corinth, the far-famed Ithmian games were held every two years. Among other athletic contests was the foot race. There is no doubt that Paul, in passing by the Olympian Stadium, which was situate in full view of the city, had often watched the racers. Being such a pronounced religious worker and teacher, we do not wonder that his thoughts led him to reflect upon the race of Life, and more particularly, the Christian race.

The metaphor is indeed striking and true to life. In this race all may win or fail. To obtain the prize, should be the great objective. Richard Watson Gilder aptly says:

"He fails who climbs to power and place
Up the pathway to disgrace.
He fails not who makes truth his cause,
Nor bends to win the crowd's applause,
He fails not—he who stakes his all
Upon the right, and dares to fall,
What though the living bless or blame?
For him the long success of fame."

According to fable, Atalanta was an athletic, yet charming maiden, who challenged all her suitors to run with her the race. She offered herself as the prize to the conqueror, but attached death as a penalty to failure. Many competed with her and lost their lives. At last Hippomenes, the judge, overcome by her charms, offered himself for the contest. Unseen, he took three golden ap-

ples, as they sprang forth from the goal, and skimmed along the sand. Hippomenes felt himself failing, and threw down one of the golden apples to detain the virgin. She, amazed, stopped to pick it up, while he shot ahead. She soon overtook him, when he threw another apple, which she stopped to get. Again she shot by him. One apple remained, which he threw to one side; and she, *self-confident*, or undecided, turned aside for it, and he reached the goal and won the prize.

The golden apples defeated her, as they have many others, in the race of life.

But what is the price of success? First, enlistment; next, training; finally, freedom from all hindrances. "Let us lay aside every weight" and press forward to win the goal.

THE TONIC OF SUCCESS

The exercise of the highest faculties of the mind is not only stimulating, but creates the highest character.

Perhaps there is nothing else which has such a magical effect upon the brain, the nervous system, the whole man in fact, as the consciousness of achieving that on which his heart is set. There is a wonderful uplift in feeling that things which we take hold of will move. Acievement acts like a tonic on the whole system, it quickens the circulation, stimulates the digestion, and enlarges hope. People who have been invalids for years, whom no medicine or physician could help, have frequently been entirely restored to health, by suddenly hearing some good news, or unexpectedly coming into some good fortune.

This shows that the mind is master, that the body and its functions are good servants, and that the thoughts are reflected in the physical man.—*Selected.*

JUNE

"And what is so rare as a day in June?
Then, if ever, come perfect days;
Then Heaven tries the earth if it be in tune,
And over it softly her warm ear lays:
Whether we look, or whether we listen,
We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;
Every clod feels a stir of might,
An instinct within it that reaches and towers
And, groping blindly above it for light,
Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers."

—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

A DEFENSELESS CAUSE

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whosoever erreth thereby is not wise."—Solomon.

HERE is a true proposition: "No evil being, power or cause can yield good fruit." Apply this, then, to the monstrous evil of intemperance that has so long cursed the world. What good has it ever done? In what way has it ever been helpful to mankind? Who are it's defenders?

Note the voice of the scientist: "I am a surgeon. My success depends upon my brain being clear, my muscles firm, and my nerves steady. No one can take alcoholic liquors without blunting these physical powers, which I must keep always on edge. As a surgeon I must not drink."—Dr. Lorenz, eminent European surgeon.

The business world—life insurance companies, railroads and nearly every honorable business man has declared against alcohol, even in moderate use.

Hear the cry of poverty. At a meeting of the Charity organization of New York City, Col. John J. McCook said: "The last year has been extremely hard on the poor, but it is a great question in my mind if it would have been so had it not been that many a poor man, many a man who had a family of starving little ones at home, went out when he got his small wages at the end of the week and spent half of them in drink. Workmen who otherwise would

be honest, self-respecting men have been driven to theft by this awful curse. Our almshouses are crowded with men and women, who, were it not for liquor, would to-day be earning an honest living, and at night, instead of sitting down to a meal bought for them by the city would be surrounded by happy families and enjoying the fruits of their own labors."

The Church has faithfully declared that this iniquitous traffic "can never be legalized without sin".

Motherhood wages war against this curse. Says Louis M. Waterman: "I stood one day in a great institution for feeble-minded children. Before me I saw seven hundred children with blasted brains and gnarled, twisted bodies, and more than ninety per cent. of it all caused by drink. And when I think that every one of them represented a home and a mother, I am not amazed, I cannot be astonished, to see a mighty host of womanhood marshalled against that dragon that is so wroth with her. It curses father, curses husband, curses son and daughter and babe, therefore how infinitely it curses the wife and mother."

"The curse of strong drink brings mourning instead of rejoicing; tears instead of laughter; rags instead of clothing; disease instead of health; insanity instead of strong mind; crime instead of law and order; death instead of life."—*R. B. Glenn.*

Who, then, will defend it? What can the end be? For the sake of all that is pure and good—let us help stop it.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY

THE FELLOWSHIP OF BROTHERHOOD

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."—The Psalmist.

FOUR brothers there were. The eldest bore the name of a British king; the others of a Prophet and two Apostles. They were country born and bred. Their earliest memories were of the fireside and the field; of home pleasures and honest toil. Of parental rule they knew only of love's law and rebuke. Mother's devotion was a gospel and father's look was a law.

These brothers grew to manhood and went forth on life's great battle plain. Children grew up in their own homes—but these men were brothers still. The ties were never severed, nor released. Always once a year, while Father and Mother lingered, were they gathered in the old homestead. Repeated for many years these now seem almost like heavenly dreams.

Time brought the gray days when these four sons within only six months, bore to their last resting place the loved forms of these devoted parents. Together these sons stood by; bowed their heads; said a prayer—and felt—THEY have gone—but WE, still are brothers.

In joy, in sorrow; absent or present—they proved the same.

These brothers had a sister, the youngest and fairest of all. The pet, the joy, the life of the household. She, too, grew up, was

wooed and won and became the mother of four sons. In the prime of womanhood, with a new born babe in her arms, the angel of death came at the close of an Autumn day and carried her from earth to heaven. Her mortal remains were borne to the slope of a beautiful hillside, and beside that grave there stood her faithful husband, her motherless children and—the four brothers—while the loved form was silently laid to rest beneath the sod, to await a glorious resurrection.

Brothers still, even more closely united because of their common loss.

God grant, that as on earth they have so closely clung to such fellowship—in eternity they may not be separated.

THE LAW OF FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship of souls does not consist in the proximity of persons. There are millions who live in close personal contact—dwell under the same roof, board at the same table, and work in the same shop—between whose minds there is scarcely a point of contact, whose souls are as far asunder as the poles; whilst, contrariwise, there are those separated by oceans and continents, ay, by the mysterious gulf that divides time from eternity, between whom there is a constant intercourse, a delightful fellowship. In truth, we have often more communion with the distant than the near.

—*Dr. Thomas.*

THE POWER OF HABIT

"He shall be holden with the cords of his sin."—Solomon.

LONGSTANDING habits are a powerful factor in life. Coleridge, who was a victim of the opium habit, in writing to a friend once said: "Conceive of a poor wretch who, for many years, has been attempting to beat off pain by the constant recurrence to the vice that reproduces it. Conceive a spirit in hell employed in tracing out for others the road to that heaven from which his crime excludes him."

Dr. Paley declares "Man is a bundle of habits". Indeed is not every one a slave to the habits which control his life?

There are certain laws of habit which are in evidence. First, the law of increasing spontaneity. Habit is like a cable, we spin a thread every day until at last we cannot break it. The chemist becomes insensible to the bad odors in the laboratory; the hunter to the sensations incident to exposure; the surgeon to emotional sympathy with pain.

Morally the person who forms the habit of lying may become hardened to the sin; the dishonest man feels more and more at ease; the gossip delights in going about repeating his slanderous work. Having formed such habits they go about as though it was perfectly natural. Then there is the law of destination. The formation of a habit, no matter what it is, tends to become permanent, excluding the formation of other habits. And habits form character.

Many men to-day would give hundreds of dollars if they had not formed some habits years ago. Now they realize the power of habit.

Habit assumes an enslaving power when the strength of the man is unable to resist it. There is an Eastern tale of a magician, who discovered by his incantation, that the philosopher's stone lay on the bank of a certain river. Unable to discover its exact locality, he strolled along the bank with a piece of iron, to which he applied every pebble he found, and then threw the pebble into the stream to prevent repetition. At last in his diligent search, he found the mystic stone, and the iron became gold in his hand; but, alas! he had become so accustomed to the "touch and go" movement, that he involuntarily hurled the real stone into the river after the others, and it was lost to him forever.

The power of habit had asserted itself in an unguarded moment. Now if the power of habit in the realm of evil is so great, can not a man as well be held by the cords of righteousness? Surely if the habits of life are good their power will exert itself equally as strong in the right direction.

"*Sow a thought, reap an act;*
Sow an act, reap a habit;
Sow a habit, reap a character;
Sow a character, reap a destiny."

MOTHER'S PRAYERS

"For this child I have prayed."—The mother of Samuel.

AN American woman attached to one of the Red Cross units in France says: "There is one word our nurses have learned to recognize in five languages, and that is 'mother'." No wonder some one else said: "God could not be everywhere, so he gave us mothers."

Who can doubt the truth of Kipling's words:

"If I were damned of body and soul,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine.
I know whose prayers would make me whole,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine."

Mother's prayers are an availing power in the world. John Ruskin declared he might have been an infidel, but he could not forget the scene of bowing at his mother's knee, while she held his tiny hands toward heaven and taught him to pray "Our Father, who art in heaven". And here is another scene which most children can never forget:

"The fire upon the hearth is low,
And there is stillness everywhere;
Like troubled spirits, here and there
The firelight shadows fluttering go.

And as the shadows 'round me creep,
A childish treble breaks the gloom
And softly from a further room
Comes: 'Now I lay me down to sleep.'

And, somehow, with that little prayer
And that sweet treble in my ears,
My thought goes back to distant years,
And lingers with a dear one there;

And as I hear the child's amen,
My mother's faith comes back to me—
Crouched at her side I seem to be,
And mother holds my hands again."

—EUGENE FIELD.

Mother's love makes her prayers a mighty factor in the world. At the close of a lecture Rev. Sam P. Jones told the following: "An angel was sent down from heaven one day to bring back the most beautiful thing on earth. He hunted long and carefully, saw a bed of full-blown American Beauty roses, lovely beyond compare, and he gathered an armful and started to return to his home above. As he soared into the air he saw a baby's smile, and filled with rapturous admiration at the sight, returned to take it too. By its side he discovered a mother's love, and with all three in his arms, he mounted to the place beyond the skies. Just outside the pearly gates the spirit paused for a moment, and, lo! the roses had withered and were dead; the baby's smile had vanished, but strong as ever the mother's love remained; and he cast the others aside and took this and laid it at the Master's feet as the most lovely and lasting thing on earth."

And many a prodigal soul has truthfully said: "I'm coming home, for mother's prayers have followed me the whole world through."

FRIENDS AND FRIENDSHIP

"There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."—Solomon.

AT the close of a long and useful life, Charles Kingsley, the celebrated English author and poet, was asked to tell the secret of his success. He replied: "I had a friend." This but expresses what many a man would say if asked the same question.

What would the life of David have been without Jonathan; or Ruth without Naomi; Timothy without Paul; or Peter, James and John without Christ; or Alfred Tennyson without Arthur Hallan; or Shelly without Keats; or Alcott without Emerson?

Did you ever lose a friend? Then you know something of the value of friendship. The choosing of friends in life is an important matter, for upon it our good or evil name depends. Socrates once said that he prized friendship above all the gold of the Persian treasury. In the life of Tiberias Caesar there is portrayed his ardent friendship with one of his Knights, Aelius Sejamis. The two were bound together as one man. The emperor raised his companion to an equality with himself; communicated to him every secret of his breast and scarcely allowed him to be removed from his presence for a single moment.

Mankind cannot be happy without friendships. There is a touching story of Picciola, a prisoner in solitary confinement, who knelt in the presence of, and nursed a little flower which sprang up

between the flagstones of his cell. In his loneliness he talked to it as though it had a soul and could speak back to him. When at last the heat of the sun withered it and it died, the strong heart within him was broken.

Who is a friend? What is friendship? There are many illuminating definitions. A small boy said: "A friend is one who knows all about you, but likes you just the same." A standard authority says: "A friend is an intimate and trustworthy companion." Randolph declared: "A friend is gold; if true he'll never leave thee."

"One there is, above all others
Well deserves the name of friend;
His is love beyond a brother's,
Costly, free, and knows no end.

Which of all our friends, to save us,
Could or would have shed his blood?
But our Jesus died to have us
Reconciled in Him to God.

Could we bear from one another
What He daily bears from us?
Yet this glorious Friend and Brother
Loves us though we treat Him thus.

O, for grace our hearts to soften!
Teach us, Lord, at length to love;
We, alas! forget too often
What a Friend we have above."

JULY

Loud is the Summer's busy song,
The smallest breeze can find a tongue,
While insects of each tiny size
Grow teasing with their melodies,
'Till noon burns with its blistering breath
Around, and day lies still as death.
Noon swoons beneath the heat it made,
And follows e'en within the shade;
Until the sun slopes in the west,
Like weary traveller, glad to rest
On pillowed clouds of many hues.

—JOHN CLARE.

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY

OUR NATION'S WAR HEROES

"And they loved not their life even unto death."—A voice in heaven. Revelation 12:11.

THE text describes the heroes of moral conquest. "The world, the flesh and the devil" had striven for supremacy in their lives. But they overcame them "because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death". They were willing to meet the supreme test of sacrifice, yea, they met the last enemy, even death.

The annual recurrence of the Nation's birthday recalls our nation's heroes in war. We must not forget them nor their deeds of valor. Many years ago Bishop Mallilieu said: "The greatest present danger of the American people is, that in the enthusiasm of victory and the pride of conquest, they forget God and trust in their own strength, and so fall into sin."

This nation has received a rich heritage of influence and power from the lives of many heroic men and women. There have been heroes of war and peace; of religion—in life and in death. Truly the heroic spirit manifests itself in motives as well as in deeds. The characteristics of heroism are declared to be valor, courage, fortitude and lofty aim. The world has always worshipped its heroes.

America is, in a peculiar sense, the mother of civil and religious liberty. It has been the watchword of all it's wars. In

the one hundred forty years of history the seven wars have all been waged for the defense of this great principle. In six conflicts we have been victorious, and in the present war against German autocracy and atrocity we will not fail. Our army is now in France and the greater army is mobilizing. The near future will bring the news of the triumph of our heroes on European battlefields.

It is with peculiar pride that we make mention of the Grand Army of the Republic. At the beginning of the civil war it was a mighty army, but the ranks are thin to-day. Spanish War veterans in considerable numbers are among us. The cause for which they fought was righteous. The people of these countries now enjoy prosperity and security. They fought to give them these blessings.

And now while we write the soldier in khaki and the sailors in blue are enlisted in the holiest war of all history. Our nation's lot has been cast with the Allied nations to crush the iron-hoofed reptile, Germany, who so ruthlessly has cast aside all treaties and rules of civilized warfare, to selfishly overpower her enemies and rule the world.

May the ending of this war bring the peace of righteousness.

TO-MORROW

"And he said to-morrow."—King Pharaoh.

LIE still, be strong, to-day,
But, Lord, to-morrow,
What of to-morrow, Lord?
Shall there be rest from toil,
Be truce from sorrow?
Be living green upon the sward,
Now but a barren green to me,
Be joy for sorrow?
Did I not die for thee?
Do I not live for thee?
Leave Me to-morrow."

The Bible says at least two things about to-morrow. First—"Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Again, "Take no thought about the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." Hence the Christian should not worry about the morrow.

Still there are some things we may truthfull say of the morrow. It is the home of hope; the child of a former time. Ideals for to-morrow are being formed to-day. The secrets of to-morrow lie in the life of to-day, for there will be beautiful and fragrant flowers to-morrow from the gardens of to-day.

There will be sunshine to-morrow from the sky of to-day; there will be power to-morrow from the storehouse of to-day; there

will be music to-morrow from the preparations of to-day; there will be victory to-morrow from the strength of to-day.

The harvests of to-morrow as to morality and immorality are in the grain of to-day.

Yet—

"Fear not the morrow and its mystery;
It hath no labor harder than the past.
It hath no portal, howsoever fast,
But opens to the bearer of the key."

—Ernest Neal Lyon.

LEAVE TO-MORROW WITH GOD

Would it not be better to leave to-morrow with God? That is what is troubling men—to-morrow's temptations, to-morrow's difficulties, to-morrow's burdens, to-morrow's duties. Martin Luther, in his autobiography, says: "I have one preacher that I love better than any other on earth; it is my little tame robin, who preaches to me daily. I put his crumbs upon my window sill, especially at night. He hops onto the window sill when he wants his supply, and takes as much as he desires for his need. From thence he always hops to a little tree near by, and lifts his voice to God and sings his carol of praise and gratitude, tucks his little head under his wing, and goes fast to sleep, and leaves to-morrow to look after itself. He is the best preacher that I have on earth."

—*Selected.*

THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."—The Psalmist.

HEREIN is described the peculiar happiness enjoyed by one who, in a spiritual experience becomes reconciled to God. Such an one is said to be "blessedly" or supremely happy.

By nature man stands in the attitude of a sinner before God. He is a transgressor; a failure before the law. There can be no happiness without forgiveness. And this condition can only be realized through an honest confession.

The Psalmist also declared: "He that covereth his sin shall not prosper; but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall find mercy."

God can and will forgive the penitent soul. "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive."

At the funeral of General Rosecrans in Los Angeles, Cal., an interesting scene took place. He had requested that at his funeral representatives of the North and of the South should shake hands over his bier. At the close of the services, at the grave four men in blue and four men in gray stood on either side of the casket and clasped hands, each of the blue with one of the gray. Then the band played "Old Hundred", and the large assembly united in singing "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow." It was a wonderful scene; men wept like children, and the entire company seemed to be permeated with the blessed spirit of peace.

It was a sign of the union of two hostile armies; of the forgiveness of all past offenses.

Thank God, all transgressions, when confessed, may be forgiven in Christ. Reader, have you confessed your sin? Have you received forgiveness?

"My God is reconciled;
His pardoning voice I hear;
He owns me for his child,
I can no longer fear;
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And, 'Father, Abba, Father', cry."

—CHARLES WESLEY.

GOD'S FORGIVENESS

Let me go and saw off a branch from one of the trees that is now budding in my garden, and all summer long there will be an ugly scar where the gash has been made; but by next autumn it will be perfectly covered over by the growing; and by the following autumn it will be hidden out of sight; and in four or five years there will be but a slight scar to show where it has been; and in ten or twenty years you would never suspect there had been an amputation. Now trees know how to overgrow their injuries and hide them; and love does not wait so long as trees do. It knows how to throw out all divine and beneficent juices, as it were, and hide from sight the wrongs done. And God says he forgives in the same way. He will never again make mention, as he declares in Ezekiel to his people, of their sins. He will never taunt them with them.

—*Beecher.*

THIRTIETH SUNDAY

SOLEMN DAYS

"What will ye do in the solemn day?"—Hosea the Prophet.

THE span of human life brings many days of sacred meaning. There are birthdays; christening days; wedding days; Church days; holidays and many other days of positive significance. But this prophet asks a question which suggests that in life's journey there are days of seriousness and solemnity and that at such times there is special need of assistance.

It is true that there are many *Solemn Days* in the life of every one. There comes the *Day of Personal Affliction.* Temporal reverses; physical distresses of body and mind; life has many disappointments; health sometimes fails. It is a solemn day when there is suffering of any kind.

The *Day of Bereavement* surely comes, when with Tennyson, we say:

"O for the touch of a vanished hand;
And the sound of a voice that is still."

Such a day was it in Egypt, when there arose a great cry "for there was not a home where there was not one dead."

The *Day of Death* is indeed a solemn day. For "it is appointed unto all men once to die." This is the final scene of battle for every one. It is the last enemy to be destroyed. Here all accounts are balanced; all engagements are cancelled.

"Death rides on every passing breeze,
He lurks on every flower."

But of all the solemn days of life's pilgrimage, which can be more solemn than the *Day of Judgment?* St. Paul declares "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." On that day the "books will be opened"; records given; futures determined.

And now, dear reader—on all these solemn days—for they will surely come, What will ye do? To whom can ye go? In such hours I invite you to turn to life's great text book—the Holy Bible—where there may be found blessed words of comfort and cheer for all who believe. "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden; take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light, and ye shall find rest to your souls." "Cast thy burden on the Lord and he will sustain thee." "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory, through the Lord Jesus Christ." "If ye confess me before men I will confess you before the Father and the holy angels."

"Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see—
O Thou who changest not, abide with me."

—Henry F. Lyte.

AUGUST

"The Emperor Octavian, called the August,
I being his favorite, bestowed his name
Upon me, and I hold it still in trust,
In memory of him and of his fame.
I am the Virgin, and my vestal flame
Burns less intensely than the Lion's rage;
Sheaves are my only garlands, and I claim
The golden Harvests as my heritage."

—H. W. LONGFELLOW *in "The Poet's Calendar.*

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

"Upon this rock I will build my Church."—Jesus.

IGNATIUS declared in his day "Wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Church." In the Gospel and Epistles of the New Testament the true Church of Christ is portrayed as a spiritual building, of which Christ is the chief cornerstone of the foundation.

In the realm of His sovereignty Jesus taught that His kingdom included all who knew Him by spiritual acquaintance; and excluded all outside this relationship. Membership in the kingdom and membership in the Church may mean very different relationships in His sight.

The Church is compared to a body of which Christ is the head. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ." "Now are ye the body of Christ, and severally members thereof."

As the head directs the movements of the body, so Christ directs the movements of His Church, by the operations of His Holy Spirit.

Christ is the life of the Church. Unless the spirit of Christ is reproduced in the lives of the Church membership, there is lack of power. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church produces the Spirit of Christ in the lives of believers.

The marks of the Church are threefold: 1. *Unity.* " One Lord, one faith, one baptism." In an orchestra of music there may

be many instruments, but harmony is the result of united effort. Within the Church there may be many denominations, but there can be but one Spirit. 2. *Holiness.* In this spiritual house each stone is consecrated or set apart for a specific work. Each stone is filled or saturated with the spiritual presence of Christ. 3. *Universality or Catholicity* also distinguishes the Church of Christ from all other organizations. The holy catholic Church embraces all peoples, races, nations, who possess the Spirit of Christ.

This spiritual building is composed of living stones (Spiritualized human beings) built upon the true foundation, which is Christ. Peter's noble confession: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," is the keynote to every true confession of faith. It was upon this rock that Jesus said "I will build my Church."

The objective of this spiritual household of believing children is the offering up of acceptable sacrifices of love and service unto God by Jesus Christ.

"The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord;
She is the new creation by water and the word;
From heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride;
With his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died."

—SAMUEL J. STONE.

THE MAN OF SORROWS

"He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."—Isaiah.

THE prophecy of Isaiah furnishes a most accurate outline of the sorrowful, suffering life of the world's Redeemer. Why the world should have hated him, who was kind to all, is indeed strange. Yet, when he exposed their sins they hated and opposed him. He was truly a man of sorrows.

But is not the great burden of the world that of sorrow and suffering? This sad fact may be the answer to the oft repeated question—why did Jesus suffer? It has never been disputed that the most sacred; the most sublime moments in all history are found in Gethsemane and Calvary. This was the culmination of the earthly life of the Man of Sorrows.

The chief sorrow of Christ was over the appalling fact of a world lost in sin. It was when he sat on the brow of Olivet looking down upon the Holy City that he said: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent uno her! How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

He sorrowed over the unbelief of his own. Nazareth rejected Him; Judas betrayed Him; Thomas doubted; Peter denied Him and with James and John slept in Gethsemane. They all forsook Him and fled.

What then is the solemn meaning of His sorrows? Do they not measure the extent of His Divine love? Do they not measure the true value of man?

It is said that when the story of West India slavery was told to the Moravians, and that it was impossible to reach the slave population because they were so separated from the ruling classes, two missionaries offered themselves and said: "We will go and be slaves on the plantations, and work and toil under the lash and get beside the poor slaves and instruct them." So they left their homes and went to these islands as slaves. And the slaves heard them because they had humbled themselves to their condition. This was indeed a noble example of sacrifice. Yet Christ's example was more wonderful. He came from heaven to earth to get by our side; that we might feel the throbbings of His tender love and be drawn so close as to hear Him whisper: "God is Love."

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST

We may paint the outward appearance of his sufferings, but not the inward bitterness or invisible causes of them. Men can paint the cursed tree, but not the curse of the law that made it so. Men can paint Christ bearing the cross to Calvary, but not Christ bearing the sins of many. We may describe the nails piercing his sacred flesh, but who can describe eternal justice piercing both flesh and spirit? We may describe the soldier's spear, but not the arrows of the Almighty; the cup of vinegar which he but tasted, but not the cup of wrath, which he drank out to the lowest dregs; the derision of the Jews, but not the desertion of the Almighty forsaking his son, that he might never forsake us who were his enemies.

—J. Maclaurin.

THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY

RIGHT THINKING

"For as he thinketh within himself, so is he."—Solomon.

REAL life is thought life, for thoughts are the beginning of ideas, and conduct is the expression of thought.

A man's thoughts affect his whole life. Right thinking produces right feeling—wrong thinking produces wrong feeling. Mental conditions may be conducive of sickness or health, as the case may be. The mind should be fed with wholesome thoughts. They feed the soul. Fill the mind with the thought of Christ, and the life will be an expression of Christ-likeness. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

The Psalmist's explanation of the source of a wicked man's wickedness was: "All his thoughts are, There is no God". But is a man responsible for his thoughts? Certainly. The will has the power to choose the good and put away the evil. By obedience of the right the will is strengthened for righteousness. But disobedience may weaken the power of the will. The swallows may fly over our heads, but we need not allow them to build nests in our hair.

Our thoughts should be chosen. As we choose companions, so we should choose our thoughts. One evil thought may prove as fatal to character building as an imperfect brick in the construction of a wall, or a rotten timber in the building of a house.

How then shall we govern our thinking, which is so vitally important to our living? Another truly says: "The glass gives

shape to the liquid it holds, but not quality. The same vessel may hold putrid water or nectar. Outward circumstances shape our lives. Conventional culture may give grace of appearance; but the ingredients of character are the inner thoughts."

"*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*"—ST. PAUL.

MEMORIES

Oft I remember those whom I have known
In other days, to whom my heart was led
As by a magnet, and who are not dead,
But absent, and their memories overgrown
With other thoughts and troubles of my own,
As graves with grasses are, and at their head
The stone with moss and lichens so o'erspread,
Nothing is legible but the name alone.
And is it so with them? After long years,
Do they remember me in the same way,
And is the memory pleasant as to me?
I fear to ask; yet wherefore are my fears?
Pleasures like flowers, may wither and decay,
And yet the root perennial may be.

—*H. W. Longfellow.*

THIRTY-FOURTH SUNDAY

NOT OF THE WORLD

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world"—Jesus

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THAT is a most important question which comes to every disciple of Christ: "What is my relation to the world and its worldliness?" These words from the prayer of Jesus help us to answer the question; but how many err in this matter.

In many instances the Christian holds himself too much apart from the world. Jesus declared He was not of this world, yet his spirit and conduct toward the world was not one of coldness, but rather of love and sympathy. How often was he found eating in the houses of the poor, the despised and the outcast. While he never approved of their sins, in any instance, he was ever ready to do any kindness that might lead to the truth. Whether it was at Jacob's well; or in the house of a certain Pharisee; or in the home of Zacchæus, we find Him going among the people that He might do them good. He came "to seek and to save that which was lost", and his followers need to remember that to hold themselves too much apart from those who sin, is to misrepresent the true attitude of the Christian toward the world.

Another serious blunder is that Christians sometimes enter too deeply into forms of worldliness, and hence become victims of their own folly. When our Lord sent out the disciples he said: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." As they were

to go among wolves and yet preserve their identity as sheep, so the disciples of Christ are to be "in the world, but not of it".

In a more definite sense we may say that as Christ had a birth originating, not of this world, but of the Spirit, so every believer "must be born again", of the Spirit.

As Christ has "all power on earth and in heaven", so St. Paul says of the believer: "God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness; but of power and love and discipline."

The Gospel also speaks of the joy of Christ and the joy of the believer. It is not a joy of worldliness or the world. Jesus said: "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." Such is the joy of adoption, which helps the believer to sing:

"O happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away."

There are also joys of service and fellowship and peace, for the Saviour says: "My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you."

Finally, like Christ, the Christian has a home not of this world. On earth He was an exile, for He had "not where to lay His head". His home was the Father's house. He declared "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you."

"Oh, think of the home over there,
By the side of the river of light,
Where the saints all immortal and fair,
Are robed in their garments of white."

SEPTEMBER

What vision wilt thou give me, autumn morn,
To make thy pensive sweetness more complete?
What tale, ne'er to be told of folk unborn?
What images of gray-clad damsels sweet
Shall cross thy sward with dainty, noiseless feet?
What nameless, shamefast longings made alive,
Soft-eyed September, will thy sad heart give?

—William Morris.

THIRTY-FIFTH SUNDAY

LONELY SOULS

"No man careth for my soul."—David.

THIS scripture verse is the outburst of a soul in trouble; a soul in danger; a soul hungering for companionship; a soul longing for the satisfying knowledge of sympathetic friendship. Our Saviour knew such an hour; when betrayed by the kiss of a disciple he was delivered into the hands of sinners—all the disciples forsook him and fled.

The world has not changed. Mankind is prone to regard only self-interest; personal pleasure and gain, while many souls who crave only a little sympathy, are left to grope in the darkness of loneliness.

But David's trouble; his eager search for sympathy in his distress drove him to his God, who is all sympathy. Here was the true source of comradeship.

The question is often asked: "Does Jesus care?" We answer in the words of St. Peter: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your care upon him, for He careth for you."

"Lonely? Ah, no, not lonely,
While Jesus standeth near!
He comes within the tent door,
I feel His presence here.

"Friendless? O, no, not friendless,
While Jesus is my Friend;
I change, but He remaineth
Sure, loving to the end.

"Weary? Ah, yes, so weary;
But leaning on His breast
My soul hath sweet assurance
Of His eternal rest.

"Helpless? Yes, weak and helpless;
But I am leaning hard
Upon the arm of Jesus,
And He is keeping guard.

"Happy? Ah, yes, so happy,
With joy no tongue can tell;
A precious, sure possession
From Christ, the living well!

"Waiting? Ah, yes, I'm waiting!
Christ bids me watch and wait;
And oft I'm led to wonder
What makes my Lord so late!"

The above expressive lines were written in a Manila camp by young Arthur Hardy, a volunteer from Haverhill, Mass., while lying ill with malignant fever. He was sent home with other sick and wounded soldiers, and died at his father's house soon after arriving there. He was about nineteen years of age. Just before closing his eyes upon earthly scenes he repeated these verses, penciled by a fevered hand in a far-off Manila camp.—*Epworth Herald.*

THIRTY-SIXTH SUNDAY

AUTUMN'S ART GALLERY

"The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing; and all the trees shall clap their hands."—Isaiah.

A SCOTCHMAN was walking along the side of a mountain in Skye, when he came to a hut in which lived an old man he had known a great many years. He saw the old man with his head bowed, and his bonnet in his hand. He came up and said to him after a bit: "I did not speak to you, Sandy, because I thought you might be at your prayers." "Well, not exactly that," said the old man, "but I will tell you what I was doing. Every morning for forty years I have taken off my bonnet here to the beauty of the world."

And who, when observing the many beautiful scenes pictured in Autumn's art gallery, has not felt like doing the same. God is the artist; all out-of-doors is the art gallery, and there are many scenes of harvest and marvelous loveliness in their colorings of beauty.

When on a golden day in Autumn, one rides through the open country are we not reminded of Goethe's lines "Nature is the garment of God". The colorings of nature are true; the shadings are always in harmony.

The messages of Autumn tide are many. If poetry is "the language of nature speaking to the heart", then here we find that message. For without nature's poetry the world becomes a counting room. One has truly said: "The course of nature is the art

of God." It seems to say "I change my raiment frequently and of'times suddenly, but being perfect in all, no change can detract from or enhance my beauty."

There is a message of joyousness. The music of the mountains in Autumn may seem like a dirge to some—yet if the heart is rightly tuned "the hills break forth with singing". Nature invariably smiles after the cloud and storm. "The trees of the field clap their hands."

Then, there is the religious message. Indeed, J. Stuart Mill, though rejecting every argument for the existence of God, declared that the argument from design in the universe is irresistible, and that nature does testify to its Maker.

"*Into the woods my Master went,*
Clean forespent, clean forespent;
Into the woods my Master came
Forespent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to him,
And the little gray leaves were kind to him,
The thorn tree had a mind to him
When into the woods he came."

HAPPY HOMES

"Then David returned to bless his household."—2 Samuel 6:20.

HERE are several definitions of a home: "The golden setting, in which the brightest jewel is mother." "A world of strife shut out, a world of love shut in." "Home is the blossom of which heaven is the fruit." "The only spot on earth where the faults and failings of humanity are hidden under the mantle of charity."

But what constitutes the happy home? Certainly not the house in which one lives, for the poet makes us sing:

"Be it ever so humble,
There is no place like home."

The happy home possesses a certain atmosphere of congeniality; co-operation and hospitableness. It is the lack of these that breeds that fatal disease "homesickness".

Dean Farrar writes on the theme thus: "The sweetest and happiest homes—homes to which men in weary life look back with yearning too deep for tears; homes whose recollections linger round our manhood like light and the sunshine and the sweet air, into which no base things can intrude—are homes where brethren dwell together in unity; where, because all love God, all love their brothers also; where, because all are very dear to all, each is dearer to each than to himself."

The happy home is where God's designs are most nearly realized. Robert Burns, the loved bard of Scotland, in his Cotter's Saturday Night", describes the family worship of the cottagers:

"From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
'An honest man's the noblest work of God';
And certes, in fair virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
What is the lording's pomp! a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refined!"

Modern home makers and builders may receive inspiration from the noble example of King David, who found time in the midst of a busy life to bless his household.

MOTHER AND HOME

It is true to nature, although it be expressed in a figurative form, that a mother is both the morning and the evening star of life. The light of her eye is always the first to rise, and often the last to set upon man's day of trial. She wields a power more decisive far than syllogisms in argument, or courts of last appeal in authority. Nay, in cases not a few, where there has been no fear of God before the eyes of the young—where His love has been unfelt and His law outraged, a mother's affection or her tremulous tenderness has held transgressors by the heart-strings, and been the means of leading them back to virtue and to God.

W. K. Tweedie, D. D.

THIRTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY

THE HOLY COMMUNION

"This do in remembrance of me."—Jesus.

O LOVE divine, what hast thou done!
The incarnate God hath died for me!
The Father's co-eternal Son
Bore all my sins upon the tree.
The Son of God for me hath died:
My Lord, My Love, is crucified."

—*Charles Wesley.*

The words "this do in remembrance of me", were used by our Lord at the institution of the Sacrament of the Holy Communion.

The carelessness and indifference which are apparent among so many Christians toward this sacrament, should be cause for great sorrow and anxiety; for among the solemn vows taken at the altar of the Church, is that wherein as members of his body, all promise to faithfully observe this sacrament.

It is a plain command from the lips of our Saviour. To neglect this duty is a plain violation, and not for any trivial excuse should the service be omitted.

The perpetuation of this solemn service depends upon his disciples in all ages; those who give their hearts to Christ and are his children through faith; especially those who have identified themselves with his Church.

In what spirit should the sacrament be taken? In the spirit of prayerful examination, as to life and motive in our relations to God and mankind. In sincerity. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." We should approach the service with but one purpose: to be all that God wants us to be. His true and faithful children. Here is no place for outward show, but humble worship.

We should receive the sacrament in the spirit of true consecration, forgetting the past and firmly resolving to live a better life. We should receive the elements of bread and wine in remembrance of his sacrifice for our sins. It must be an act of faith. We do not look upon the bread and wine as being the actual body and blood —but symbols of the body and blood of Christ.

There may be danger of forgetting the scene of the cross. What a scene do we behold in America on Memorial Day? Everywhere people are carrying flowers to place upon the graves of their loved dead. They thus remember them. Can we do less for Him who has saved us by his death?

Let us draw near with thankful hearts. One of the most wonderful statements of the Gospel story is that which tells of Christ, who in the presence of his betrayer "took the cup and when he had given thanks, said 'this is my blood which is shed for you. This do in remembrance of me'."

THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward."—St. Paul.

THE trials of life are the common portion of mankind. Job declares that "Man, that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble." The physical battle is a losing one. The sufferings of this world come in many forms. No life is exempt. Toil, trial, tears, disappointments, discouragements. Sometimes despair, sickness, pain, suffering, loneliness, and death—these are the hard propositions against which mortal man must contend.

Who has not asked: What is the meaning of all this? Or with Charles McKay:

"Tell me, secret soul, O tell me Hope and Faith,
Is there no resting place from sorrow, sin and death?
Is there no happy spot where mortals may be blessed;
Where grief may find a balm, and weariness a rest?
Faith, Hope and Love, best boons to mortals given,
Waved their bright wings and whispered 'Yes—in heaven'."

But St. Paul declares the sufferings of this present time are not to be "compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward." Are the words of Waller true when he says: "For all we know of what the blessed do above is, that they sing and that they love."?

John Bunyan was asked a question about heaven that he could not answer: he therefore advised the inquirer to live a holy

life and go and see. Of the future glory we may not know all, for "here we know in part". Milton writes: "What if earth be but the shadow of heaven, and things therein each to other like, more than below is thought?"

It was Isaiah, the prophet, who wrote: "Men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen a God beside thee, who worketh for him that waiteth for him." In the future glory there will be freedom from earthly toils. An aged Christian when asked how he did, replied: "I am going home as fast as I can, as every honest man ought to do when his day's work is done; and I bless God I have a good home to go to." Isaiah further declares: "And everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

"There is a land of pure delight, where saints immortal reign,
Infinite day excludes the night, and pleasures banish pain."

In brilliant lines Alfred Kunner says: "Write it in letters of gold. Write it upon the face of the sun and spell it with stars across the darkest night of thy sorrows: "Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away."

OCTOBER

He comes in pomp, October. To him all times belong;
The frost is on his sandals, but the flush is on his cheeks,
September sheaves are in his arms, June voices when he speaks;
The elms lift bravely, like a torch within a Grecian hand:
See where they light the monarch on through the splendid land.
The sun puts on a human look behind the hazy fold,
The mid-year moon of silver is struck anew in gold,
In honor of the very day that Moses saw of old,
For in the burning bush that blazed as quenchless as a sword
The old lieutenant first beheld October and the Lord.

—Benjamin Franklin Taylor.

THE HOLY SABBATH

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."
—Fourth Commandment.

WHO will deny that at all times and under all circumstances we may safely look to Jesus as authority on all subjects vital to the Christian's life. What He taught may wisely be applied to all times.

The proper observance of the Sabbath is vital to the best interests of mankind. In solving the problem, two questions seem to be important, viz: Frst, shall the commands of God be recognized as supreme authority, or, Second, shall the commercial aims of the corporation and the selfish life of the pleasure seeker be granted?

One answer was given by the famous singer, Jenny Lind. At Stockholm, once, she was requested to sing on the Sabbath at the king's palace on the occasion of some great festival. She refused, and the king called personally upon her, in itself a high honor, and, as her sovereign, commanded her attendance. Her reply was, "There is a higher King, sire, to whom I owe my first allegiance," and she refused to be present.

But what did the Saviour say about the Sabbath? To the Pharisees, He said: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." "Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day." What He did on this holy day may help us to a proper understanding of our duty. He honored the day, by regu-

larly attending the house of worship; He preached and taught the word; He performed not less than eight miracles; He dined with a chief Pharisee while on a journey.

Therefore all Christians should always have good reasons for their activities or omissions on this day.

By the words and example of our Saviour we learn that there are certain reasonable laws which should govern the observance of the Sabbath. The law of Christian liberty; of moral necessity; of loyalty to the Divine command; the law of worship which recognizes the real needs of the soul, and the law of mercy.

Dr. David J. Burrell says: "The responsibility for the present decay of Sabbath observance must be laid in largest measure, on those who profess to be followers of Christ. There are thirty millions of religious people in our country who control the preponderance of its wealth and culture and influence; and they can have things their own way."

"A Sabbath well spent
Brings a week of content
And strength for the toils of the morrow;
But a Sabbath profaned,
Whatsoever be gained,
Is a certain forerunner of sorrow."

—Sir Matthew Hale.

THE MESSAGE OF THE STARS

"When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and stars which thou hast ordained."—Psalmist.

IN the minds of the ancients the stars occupied an important place. They were supposed to exercise some influence over human life and the course of nature.

In Dr. Van Dyke's "Story of the Other Wise Man," he makes Tyranus say: "The stars are the thoughts of the eternal. They are numberless." And in the story of Christ's birth the star of Bethlehem has a prominent place. To Abraham the promise was given: "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens." The message of the stars comes down through all the ages.

The Star of Bethlehem shines out in history with a light and mystery which adds to its lustre. What it was and where it came from has led to many opinions. Some believe it was a special star; some a new planet; a comet. Others advocate the theory of a conjunction of planets.

The wise men of Sacred story rejoiced when the star appeared. It was their guiding star and led them to Bethlehem where they found the babe Christ.

The Bethlehem star truly sheds the light of truth on the pathway of the ages and leads all men to the rewards that come to those who believe.

An unknown author writes: "This star shines through clouds of war and tumult and human unrest; for it is He who shall shake

all nations, turning and overturning until the sceptre is acknowledged to be His in all the kingdoms of the world. It shines in the dark places of the earth, bringing promise of the morning. It shines in homes of sorrow, a blessed ray among the gloom. Happy, indeed, are we if upon our own spiritual sky His star has risen and become our light, our guide, our harbinger of eternal day."

"*In the light of that star lie the ages impearled,*
And that song from afar has swept over the world.
Every heart is aflame, while the beautiful sing
In the homes of the nations, that Jesus is King."

—J. G. HOLLAND.

THE EVENING STAR

"Many glories mingle
In the azure air,
But to me most charming
Shines the evening star.
For in its pure whiteness
'Tis a type of Him
In whose holy brightness
Sun and stars are dim.

Thou art high and holy,
Angels worship Thee:
Thou art meek and lowly,
For Thou lovest me.
Thou with light enlivening,
Shining from afar,
Art at once my evening
And my morning star."

—*Selected.*

THE JOYS OF WORSHIP

"They that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."—Jesus.

THERE are those in the world who speak with contempt concerning the joys of Christian worship, or the reality of religion.

By the pleasures of sense, man resembles the beasts which perish; by the joys of devotion he is assimilated to the immortal angels of light. A father once wrote to his son concerning this theme and said: "Every branch of devotion is laden with delicious fruit."

To worship God acceptably one must know him. Formality alone is not worship. Jesus taught that the joys of true spiritual worship surpass all others in purity, intensity and permanence. A noted writer once said: "The spirit of worship is one of the greatest blessings and the lack of it one of the greatest misfortunes, that a man can experience." How true, then, are the words of Richard Watson: "I know of no pleasures so rich, none so pure, none so hallowing in their influences and constant in their supply as those which result from the true and spiritual worship of God."

Worship is the communion of our spiritual natures with God. It implies the engagement of all the powers toward God. Religion becomes a blessed reality when the spirit of worship lives in the soul. Without it there is an aching void. It leads the soul to prayer and to the sanctuary.

The joys of this present world are passing, uncertain, shallow, vain, and of brief duration. But the joys of the worshipper of God are enduring even throughout all eternity.

"Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in thy presence will prevail to make!
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take,
What parched grounds revive as with a shower!
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;
We rise, and all, the distant and the near,
Stands forth a sunny outline brave and clear.
We kneel, how weak! We rise, how full of power!
Why, wherefore should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others, that we are not always strong;
That we are ever overborne with care;
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with thee."

—RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH, D. D.

A proper admonition, then, is "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking our assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh."

Forty-third Sunday

THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT

"But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal."—St. Paul.

THE work of the Divine Spirit is observed in creation, in the incarnation and in the gift of prophecy, "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Spirit of God."

The operations of the Holy Spirit were further seen in the inauguration of the Church, when the apostles "were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Jesus declared that the proof of the Spirit's coming would be "conviction of the world in respect of sin; of righteousness and of judgment". The Scriptures clearly teach, then, that as Christ is God by eternal filiation with God the Father; so the Holy Spirit is God by an eternal procession. Jesus further said: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me."

In His relation to the Christian life, the Holy Spirit is Teacher, Remembrancer, Guide, Glorifier of Christ, Promise of the Father, other Comforter.

"O Spirit of the living God,
In all thy plentitude of grace,
Where'er the foot of man hath trod,
Descend on our apostate race.

Give tongues of fire and hearts of love,
To preach the reconciling word;
Give power and unction from above,
Where'er the joyful sound is heard.

Be darkness, at thy coming, light;
Confusion—order, in thy path;
Souls without strength, inspire with might;
Bid mercy triumph over wrath.

Baptize the nations; far and nigh
The triumphs of the cross record;
The name of Jesus glorify,
Till every kindred call him Lord."

—JAMES MONTGOMERY.

Let us then, "Grieve not, resist not, quench not, the Holy spirit of God."

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A GUIDE

There are many truths leading out before the mind of the disciple; the Spirit, like a guide, shows which one to take. The disciple has to do the walking in the way. The Spirit does not drive, but, rather, walks ahead. If we would know the right way, we can look to see if the Spirit of God is walking in it. Is it such a truth as would seem to be a fitting pathway for the spirit of God? This question will of itself settle some difficulties. The bringing of the thought of the Spirit of God into our plans will keep us from slipping off into some evils, for some courses need only to be connected with the thought of God to reveal their inner falsity.

—*Bishop F. J. McConnell.*

NOVEMBER

The mellow year is hasting to a close;
The little birds have almost said their last,
Their small notes twitter in the dreary blast—
That shrill-piped harbinger of early snows;—
The patient beauty of the scentless rose,
Oft with the Morn's hoar crystal quaintly glassed,
Hangs, a pale mourner for the summer past,
And makes a little summer where it grows:—
In the chill sunbeam of the faint brief day
The dusky waters shudder as they shine;
The russet leaves obstruct the straggling way
Of oozy brooks, which no deep banks define,
And the gaunt woods, in ragged, scant array,
Wrap their old limbs with somber ivy-twine.

—HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

FORTY-FOURTH SUNDAY

WHAT IS MAN?

"And God created man in his own image."—Moses.

HUMAN existence, when viewed from the standpoint of human wisdom alone, is an interrogation. It is perfectly natural that men should ask of their existence: When? Who? What? The chief desire and aim of all investigation, in all ages, has been toward this end.

If divine revelation, and the light which it throws upon the subject, is disregarded the question has not yet been satisfactorily answered. To the psalmist's question, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" I would answer: Man is a material formation, by Divine creation, having a living soul which is immortal.

The declaration of man's creation found in Holy Writ is in perfect harmony with the material surroundings which man has had during all his history. Abundant provision for his material needs is found nearly everywhere. But in the story of man's creation his material formation did not become a living substance until God breathed in him, whereupon he became a living soul. In his moral character man was created in the image of God, which was that of righteousness and true holiness. Man was thus created a being of responsibility, endowed with free will; subject to the law of obedience.

Before his temptation and fall, man lived in a state of complete moral healthfulness; the law of duty was plainly opened to him; there was in his environment ample sources of satisfaction,

and most weighty reasons for obedience. In his fall we witness a yielding to the will of Satan—man's enemy—with the result of death. Which implied, then and now, the separation of man from the former favorable surroundings to a life of labor and suffering here, and a condition of eternal misery hereafter—except for the gracious plan of Salvation proposed by the Creator.

Man, then, is a highly responsible being, and in his hand is the power by which he may become eternally happy or eternally miserable. God's sovereignty; His mercy and the provision which He has made for man's present and future happiness, bring man face to face with his supreme duty, viz: "Fear God and keep his commandments."

Let us love, not hate; obey, not rebel; forgive, not resent; be patient, not fretful; hopeful, not given to despair; prayerful, not forgetful of God.

FORTY-FIFTH SUNDAY

THE CROSS OF CHRIST

"Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified unto me, and I unto the world."—St. Paul.

THE royal banner is unfurled; the Cross is reared on high,
On which the Saviour of the world, is stretched in agony.
See! through his holy hands and feet the cruel nails they drive;
Our ransom thus is made complete, our souls are saved alive.
Hail, holy cross! from thee we learn the only way to heaven;
And O, to thee may sinners turn, and look and be forgiven.
Jehovah, we thy name adore, in Thee we will rejoice,
And sing 'till time shall be no more the triumphs of the cross."

—*John Chandler.*

Those followers of Christ who think they will reach heaven without bearing crosses are endeavoring to rob the cause of its most brilliant lustre. No ray of light that has ever shone in this dark world can surpass that which shines from the Cross of Christ. Upon the cruel, blood-stained Cross of Christ is reflected the beauty of holiness and the perfection of the divine sacrifice. Well might the poet sing:

"In the cross of Christ I glory, towering o'er the wrecks of time,
All the light of sacred story gathers round its head sublime."

What, then, is the Cross of Christ to the Christian? It is the place of refuge. In the western country, in the autumn, some-

times the prairie grass catches fire. When the wind is strong, the flames may be seen rolling along twenty feet high, destroying life and property in their onward rush. When the frontiersmen see what is coming they know they cannot run fast enough to escape it. Then they burn the grass around them and take refuge in the burnt district. Here they are safe. So there is one spot on earth swept over by the fires of Calvary where the Son of God took over into his own bosom the terrors of sin and death, and here the believing soul is safe forever.

Let the author of Ben Hur further tell us of the scene on Calvary: "The cross is to be planted. Strong arms lift it and carry the suffering Saviour to the spot. The third hour is at hand. The face bruised and bleeding, black with blood and dust as it was, suddenly lightens up with a glow. The eyes open wide, and fixed upon some one visible to him in the heavens, he shouted! and there were content and relief, even triumph in the shout he gave. 'It is finished!' Softly the light in his eyes goes out and the thorned head sinks upon the laboring breast. But the dying soul, seemingly recollecting itself, those near him hear the last words spoken, in a whisper: 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.' A tremor shakes the tortured body—a scream of the fiercest anguish—the mission of the earthy life is over. The heart, with all its love, is broken."

BEACON LIGHTS IN THE WORLD

"Ye are the light of the world."—Jesus.

ALL light, whether physical, moral or spiritual, emanates from God. It was the Creator who said: "Let there be light: and there was light." The Scriptures assert that all moral light proceeds from God. Paul to the Corinthians writes: "It is God that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

The Apostle John, who says "God is love", also says: "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Paul also declares that God dwelleth "in light unapproachable; whom no man hath seen, nor can see". James speaks of God as "the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning".

All followers of Christ are declared to be lights in the world. Of John the Baptist it was said: "He was the lamp that burneth and shineth." Paul was stricken down in the roadway by a light from heaven, and later at Antioch, declared that by the commandment of God, he was sent to be a light to the Gentiles.

Christians, then, in all ages, are to be lights, because of the shining of the Divine light in their hearts, through repentance and faith in Christ.

On one of the wildest portions of the coast of New England there stands an old beacon tower, from whose summit there has

flashed for many a year a warning and guiding light for those "that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters." This tower is visible for many miles inland and also far out to sea. It has been in its accustomed place so long that travelers would be alarmed if by night they did not behold it sending forth the light, by which they could be guided into a safe harbor.

Every Christian should be like this, for Jesus said: "Let your light so shine before men; that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

A traveler visiting the lighthouse of Calais said to the keeper, "But what if one of your lights should go out at night?" "Never! impossible!" he cried. "Sir , yonder are ships sailing to all parts of the world. If to-night one of my burners were out, in six months I should hear from America or India, saying that on such a night the lights of Calais lighthouse gave no warning, and some vessel had been wrecked." All Christians should feel as deeply the responsibility that rests upon them as lights in the world.

FORTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY

THE DUTY OF THANKFULNESS

"Offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High."—Psalmist.

THE American Thanksgiving day dates its origin from the Pilgrim Fathers, who, at the very beginning of their colonial life recognized the leadings of Divine Providence by a simple service of thanksgiving to the giver of all good. The example of the Pilgrims was not forgotten by the first leader of the new Republic and in 1789, General Washington caused to be issued the first national Thanksgiving proclamation. In 1863, at the close of the Civil war Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation of thanksgiving for victory won; and since that time these proclamations have been annual.

We recognize the appropriateness of the time of year designated. The sowing time and the growing time are rightfully succeeded by the harvest time, when the golden fruits of the season are garnered.

We may wisely follow the custom of our ancestors, in offering thanksgiving to Almighty God for blessings received. Let us this day unite most humbly in the offering of prayers and supplications to the great God and ruler of all nations; beseeching Him to pardon all our transgressions that we may worthily "offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving and pay our vows to the Most High."

"Thinkful" is the old anglo-saxon word for "thankful", and it is true that a thoughtful mind makes a thankful heart. Moses saw God in the burning bush, because he "turned aside to see".

We have heard of a grand musical festival, where the conductor suddenly threw up his baton, stopping the whole performance. In the midst of the marvellous harmony of the great orchestra, the director's keen ear missed the single note of one instrument, which was failing to do it's part.

Dearly beloved, in the celebration of our national Thanksgiving festival, when a chorus from angels and all the heavenly hosts; from sun, moon and stars of light; from mountains and all hills; fruitful valleys and all cedars; from young and old, rich and poor; with their mighty anthem ascending heavenward, I have wondered if the Heavenly Father, the divine conductor, detects a missing note of thankfulness from any heart.

"*Let everything that hath breath praise Jehovah.*"

DECEMBER

"To this hard heart of mine
And all the world beside,
Bring thou thy song divine,
O blessed Christmas-tide!
How long must Earth with war's discordant thunder
From sea to sea be rocked—from height to height?
How long will Christ-bought souls go forth to plunder,
And brazen wrongs do battle with the right?
Sing, angel choir, again;
Sing till the cannons rust!
Sing till the hates of men
Are trampled in the dust!"

—Fred Clare Baldwin.

FORTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY

JESUS IN THE BOAT

"And He went up unto them into the boat; and the wind ceased."
—St. Mark.

ONE day, toward evening, when Christ was still on earth and in companionship with the disciples, He commanded them to take their boat and cross over the lake, leaving him to follow. Before they had reached deep water the night settled over them, and a strong head wind arose which raised the waves and made their progress slow and dangerous. Jesus stayed alone on the mountain, but saw how they were toiling and rowing. About three o'clock in the morning, just before the break of day, Jesus came near them, walking on the water and seemed disposed to pass by them. When the disciples saw him they were frightened. But Jesus spoke unto them, saying: "Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid." Peter being emboldened by the command of Jesus tried to walk on the water, but was frightened by the winds and waves. He cried for help and Jesus held out his hand and saved him. When Jesus stepped into the boat the wind ceased. This so deeply affected the disciples that they bowed down before Jesus and called him the Son of God.

Jesus in the boat caused the storm to cease. How changed was the scene. He comes into our lives to strengthen faith; to cheer the heart and give peace to the soul.

Reader, is Jesus in your boat?

On another occasion, when Jesus was exhausted by the labors of the day and was with the disciples in a boat, he lay asleep upon

a pillow. A storm arose and the disciples were affrighted, saying "Carest thou not that we perish?" Then Jesus arose and rebuked the storm and there was a great calm.

With Jesus in our boat we are safe amid the winds and storms of life.

LOOKING TO JESUS

Jesus, Saviour, Son of God,
Bearer of the sinner's load,
I to Thee will look and live,
And, in looking, praises give.
Looking lightens, looking heals,
Looking all the gladness seals;
Looking breaks the binding chain,
Looking sets us free again;
Looking scatters all our night,
Makes our faces shine with light;
Looking quickens, strengthens, brings
Heavenly gladness on its wings.
Jesus, Saviour, Son of God,
Bearer of the sinner's load,
I would rise to Thee above.
I would look and praise and love;
Ever looking let me be
At the blood-besprinkled tree,
Blessing Thee with lip and soul
While the endless ages roll.

—*Horatious Bonar.*

Forty-ninth Sunday

ENTHUSIASM

"It is good to be zealously sought in a good matter at all times."
—St. Paul.

IF one could visit the gray, gloomy slopes of yonder valley, lying toward the sunset, would he not see the ghosts of vanished enthusiasms? "Voiceless, somber, they linger listless among the tombs and whisper to the low chill winds the tale of their birth, the flush and fullness of their strong impetuous life; then the story of their death."

That is what was meant by the aged man who said to the youth in deep confidence: "I ought to accept this call to this field of usefulness, but my enthusiasms are dead." The old veteran well knew that with dead enthusiasms he could never succeed at his task. He also knew the value of present enthusiasm.

No less a man than Emerson said: "Nothing great was ever accomplished without enthusiasm."

Modern politicians know this. If a great issue is at stake and there is likelihood of a close contest, they know that somehow there must be enlisted an enthusiasm that will arouse the indifferent and bring to pass a great victory. In the social world what is more disastrous to the purposes of society than lack of enthusiasm among the members? Indeed, what a dead world this would be without enthusiasm.

In religion there should also be enthusiasm, almost without limit. Many pretend not to believe in this, though they may be

enthusiastic in other matters. But Paul says "It is good to be zealously sought in a good matter at all times."

Now what is better than religion? Is there any cause in which men may more safely be enthusiastic?

On the value of religious enthusiasm, Dr. J. M. Buckley writes:

"It may be necessary sometimes to check excessive emotion, but we should never do it in any meeting unless it is necessary, and then do it quietly. Of course, if a man lets go of the rudder of reason and depends entirely on the wings of feeling, he has lost his manhood for the time. But there was a philosopher, as he thought, who bought a garden and planted in it some trees, and one tree grew unshapely and he put his wits together to keep it from growing unshapely. He made up his mind the cause of its growing was the sap, therefore he drew out a pint of sap every day and the tree did not grow unshapely because it did not grow at all. He called in a neighboring gardener to explain the matter. The experienced gardener said to him: 'You took the sap out of the sapling. You ought to have drawn the sap out of your own head.' "

FIFTIETH SUNDAY

BEULAH LAND

"In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you."—Jesus.

IN one of our religious papers some time ago there was related the story of a man, who, when dying, called his little daughter to his bedside and told her how dreadful he felt because he must die. In her childish faith she said: "Why, papa, you have a beautiful home in the mountains, and a beautiful home in Florida; and a beautiful home by the sea; haven't you a home in heaven?"

This man who had made such bountiful provision for this life was obliged to shake his head sadly and say that he did not know. How sad. Yet does not this man represent a class in the world who are thinking very little of the world beyond this? But the Saviour of mankind has not left us in ignorance concerning the heavenly world.

Here, then, is the truth. We should make ready for eternity.

A traveler, returned from Jerusalem, found, in conversation with Humboldt, that he was as conversant with the streets and houses of Jerusalem as he himself was. On being asked how long it was since he had visited it, the aged philosopher replied, "I have never been there, but I expected to go sixty years ago, and I prepared myself."

Jerusalem the golden,
With milk and honey blest,
Beneath thy contemplation
Sink heart and voice oppressed:
I know not, O I know not
What social joys are there;
What radiancy of glory,
What light beyond compare.

They stand, those halls of Zion,
All jubilant with song,
And bright with many an angel,
And all the martyr throng:
The Prince is ever in them,
The daylight is serene;
The pastures of the blessed
Are decked in glorious sheen.

There is the throne of David;
And there, from care released,
The song of them that triumph,
The shout of them that feast;
And they who, with their leader,
Have conquered in the fight,
Forever and forever
Are clad in robes of white.

O sweet and blessed country,
The home of God's elect!
O sweet and blessed country,
That eager hearts expect!
Jesus, in mercy bring us
To that dear land of rest;
Who art, with God the Father,
And spirit, ever blest.

—BERNARD OF CLUNY.

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

"Who do men say that I am?"—Jesus.

THIS is certainly a proper question to ask. Through all the centuries since his birth Christ has been on trial. Before the bar of public opinion the meek and lowly one is standing. It is most interesting to note what various peoples thought of Him during his life on earth.

To John the Baptist he was "The Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world". To the Roman Centurion he was "the Son of God". To the despairing Judas he was the "innocent blood". Of him Pilate said: "I find no fault in Him." The Apostle Peter declared "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God". Even doubting Thomas exclaimed "My Lord and my God", and Nicodemus said: "Thou art a Teacher come from God."

Before the gaze of men who have lived since His time, Christ is the "fairest among ten thousand, the lily of the valley, the bright and morning star". The Mohammedan world gave him the high title of the Messiah and set Him above all the prophets. To Napoleon he was "the Emperor of Love". Jean Paul Richter calls Him "the holiest among the mighty and the mightiest among the holy, who lifted with His pierced hand empires off their hinges, and turned the stream of centuries out of its channel, and still governs the ages".

In the light of these tributes we may also fearlessly declare that the life, character and works of Christ are unquestionably attested by those who struggled to disbelieve Him, and at last bore witness in His favor. Dr. Barnes even suggests that "unconsciously, unadmittedly, Jesus was the 'star' of faith which Robert Ingersoll saw rising in the night of death, and as it's light fell upon the new-made grave, he mistook the benediction of comfort proffered by the pierced hands for the rustle of an angel's wing."

What we think of Christ affects materially our conduct. He demands a personal answer. He first asked "Who do *men* say that I am?" But that is not enough. Of His followers in all ages, He asks " But who do *ye* say that I am?"

If this important question is still unanswered by any who read these lines, why not this moment surrender yourself to Him?

It is said that Wagner's earliest compositions were in the manner of Beethoven. But was not there good reason for this? For years when a youth, he had lived with Beethoven's compositions, until he knew them by heart; the spirit of the teacher had completely mastered the spirit of the pupil. The result of imitation was inevitable. Will not the spirit of our Master, Christ, pass upon us, if with similar devotion we seek to reproduce the genius of his life in ours?

CHRISTMAS CHEER

"Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the People."—St. Luke.

THE spirit of Christmas has captured the world. The festival becomes universal in spite of religious antagonisms. Christmas cheer is the legitimate child of Christianity. Because Jehovah lavished upon the world His greatest "gift" the world has made the Saviour's birthday the chief gift season of the year.

We do well to heartily wish that the spirits of "Christmas Past", "Christmas Present" and "Christmas to Come" might wake up every miser "Scrooge" to hearty benevolence and that every poor "Bob Cratchit" with his "Tiny Tim" might have a blessed day in his humble home.

The true spirit of giving is a heart quality. Customs may demand certain formalities, but the true spirit of giving does not wait. The ancients regarded the offering of a gift the token of good will. The acceptance of a gift was the sign of good will reciprocated.

Giving is not a helpful practice unless it is prompted by lofty sentiment. Two evils should be avoided in the matter—carelessness and extravagance. The Christmas season prompts both the custom and the spirit of giving. It is the time to be truly happy. To give and forgive. God's great gift to the world was the Christ. "He so loved that He GAVE."

The visit of the Wise Men at the birth chamber of Christ illustrates the true spirit of giving. They came seeking the Saviour. Finding Him, "they fell down and worshiped". They offered Him the homage of their souls. They brought the homage of heart and of earth; they opened their treasures; they offered their gifts; they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. The true cheer of Christmas is found in the love of Christ—in paying homage to the Christ. "On earth peace among men" is the Christmas greeting of Christian cheer.

CHRISTMAS BELLS

"Sing, Christmas bells!
Say to the earth, This is the morn
Whereon our Saviour-King is born;
Sing to all men—the bond, the free,
The rich, the poor, the high, the low—
The little child that sports in glee—
The aged folk that tottering go—
Proclaim the morn
That Christ is born,
That saveth them, that saveth me!"

—*Selected.*

A LOOK AT THE PAST

"And God seeketh again that which is passed away."—Solomon.

IT is related of a great statesman of the South that when he was passing away, some one asked if they should pray for him. He replied: "No, my past life must be my prayer." This sentiment was entirely in harmony with the truth set forth in the words of Solomon.

The past has been, and is sealed forever. The present now is; the future will be what we make it. But few who reflect upon the past do so without regret, sorrow or joy. Regret, because of sins committed, wrongs done or duties left undone. Sorrow, because of deaths, disappointments, troubles. Joy, because of once youthful days, when cares were unknown, pleasures unbounded, hopes radiant, skies unclouded; when, in the language of Thomas Gray, "Youth was on the bow and pleasure at the helm". Then, there is joy over good deeds done and kind words spoken, if such has been the record.

It may not always be helpful to brood over the past. Some lives are especially full of unpleasant memories. But the past is a great teacher and if we sit patiently at the feet of this learned sage, many lessons, helpful both to our temporal and spiritual lives may be learned. Most people at certain times fall into meditation and may say as did David "While I was musing the fire burned".

There is no life entirely without some sunshine; some blessing; some joy.

The experiences we have, the gifts and blessings bestowed upon us, are the result of an over-ruling Providence, and we shall be held accountable for the spirit with which we receive them and the use we make of them. While man possesses a will, by which he does or does not live in harmony with the Divine purpose, God is unceasingly at work in many ways whereby He may lead him into the fellowship of his children, by at last winning his heart, his will, his all. No blessing or kindness bestowed is for an idle purpose. All is done in love and for the purpose of drawing us nearer to Him.

The past cannot be undone.

"Only a thought, but the work it wrought,
Could never by tongue or pen be taught.
For it ran through life like a thread of gold
And the life bore fruit a hundred fold.
Only a word, but 'twas spoken in love,
With a whispered prayer to the Lord above;
And the angels in heaven rejoiced once more
For a new-born soul entered in by the door."

—JESSE GORDON.

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